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Operational activities for development: South-South cooperation for development

State of South-South cooperation

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 70/222, assesses the concrete measures taken by the United Nations development system to improve its support to South-South cooperation initiatives at the national, regional and global levels over the reporting period (2015-2016). In addition, it highlights a number of actions taken by the United Nations development system to guide the application of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The report concludes with a few recommendations on the way forward.

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I. Background

1. The need for enhanced cooperation among developing countries is taking on new meaning in the global development landscape. Notably, the role of South-South cooperation is emphasized in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (see General Assembly resolution 70/1), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (see General Assembly resolution 69/313) and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

2. The international community thus underscored, in its agenda-setting processes of 2015, the importance of sharing lessons and innovative practices of the South during the implementation of key global frameworks. It is recognized that when equipped with proven Southern solutions, the United Nations system can play a catalytic role to spur more impactful South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives.

3. Another reason behind calls for enhanced South-South cooperation is the resilience of emerging economies that continue to be major contributors to socioeconomic transformation in the developing world in spite of volatilities in the global economy. In 2015, China boosted its support to South-South cooperation with major announcements of setting up two funds worth $5.1 billion[1] to help developing countries to address climate change and implement the 2030 Agenda. India also announced a $10 billion concessional line of credit to Africa over the next five years.[2]

4. Many other initiatives attest to the increasing importance of South-South cooperation as a growing dimension of international cooperation for development. Interregional South-South summits held in 2015, most notably the India-Africa Forum Summit, the Forum for China-Africa Cooperation, the Forum of China and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), and the Summit of South American-Arab Countries (ASPA), convened to set strategies and agendas, enhance policy coordination and launch joint initiatives that have also become key means of bolstering South-South trade and investment, and infrastructure development, among numerous other exchanges relevant to the attainment of sustainable development. These formal gatherings result in concrete action plans and resources focused on strengthening Southern collaboration in areas of strategic importance such as health, agriculture and infrastructure development.

5. The contribution of South-South cooperation to development is also increasingly seen in the emergence of subregional and regional development banks that are supplementing development finance provided by traditional multilateral and existing regional development banks. Similarly, Southern national development banks that operate globally and Southern-led multilateral banks also hold out considerable promise for the acceleration of sustainable development through South-South cooperation.

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[1] www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/09/25/us-china-joint-presidential-statement-climate-change; http://english.mofcom.gov.cn/article/zt_usvisit/news/201509/20150901125972.shtml.

[2] Report of the Secretary-General on trends and progress in international development cooperation (E/2016/65), para. 25.

6. Some of the new regional banks, such as the new Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, are designed to operate within and across regions. A number of Southern national banks are similarly designed to invest at the regional or international level in order to provide external finance as part of their operations. In 2014, the stock of loans disbursed by the China Development Bank, the Export and Import Bank of China and the Brazilian National Development Bank amounted to $1,762 billion, equal to more than five times the amount of loans of $328 billion provided by the World Bank.[3]

7. Against that backdrop, the United Nations system has continued the trend highlighted in my two previous reports on the state of South-South cooperation in 2014 (A/69/153) and 2015 (A/70/344). As requested by Member States, the present report provides an account of steps taken by the United Nations development system to enhance coherence and coordinated support to South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation based on information provided by various United Nations organizations and the research conducted by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC).

II. State of support by the United Nations development system to South-South and triangular cooperation in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

8. Guided by the outcomes of the transformative global processes that took place during the biennium, South-South and triangular cooperation approaches continue to be increasingly integrated into the policy frameworks and strategies of the United Nations system with a view to improving their programmatic and operational support at the country, regional and global levels in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Through the work of United Nations country teams, the reporting period also witnessed an increase in the integration of South-South and triangular cooperation into United Nations Development Frameworks.[4]

A. Integration of South-South cooperation into policy frameworks and strategies

9. Having incorporated South-South and triangular cooperation into their strategic plans for 2014-2017, many specialized agencies, programmes and funds of the United Nations system have transitioned to formulating new strategies, policy frameworks and operational guidelines on South-South and triangular cooperation. Some have revised their existing tools and strategies, aligning them with the 2030 Agenda towards the mainstreaming of South-South approaches into their policies and programmatic activities. Several illustrative examples are presented below.

10. South-South cooperation is reflected in the World Food Programme (WFP) strategic plan for 2014-2017 as a means of advancing progress towards the Zero Hunger Challenge objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals. Having put in

[3] United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), *Trade and Development Report 2015*. Available from http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/tdr2015_en.pdf.

[4] www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/qcpr/dialogue-briefing-proposals-undoco-director.pdf.

place its policy on South-South and triangular cooperation in 2015, WFP has taken measures to expand its engagement with developing countries in the implementation of Goal 2. To further support the implementation of this policy, WFP is finalizing a how-to guide on the integration of South-South and triangular cooperation approaches into its regular programmatic work at the country and regional levels.

11. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in its strategic plan for 2014-2017, recognizes South-South cooperation as a "particular area of upstream work" and a critical means in the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. The creation of a corporate unit and a related project dedicated to promoting South-South cooperation has given further impetus to these efforts. UNFPA is now designing its new corporate plan for South-South cooperation as a means of contributing to the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Conference and the 2030 Agenda.

12. South-South cooperation is now fully integrated into the Strategic Framework and Medium Term Plan and Programme of Work and Budget for 2014-2017 of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Since the launch of its corporate strategy for South-South cooperation in 2013, FAO has expanded its vision and scope for South-South cooperation, including through adopting a wider range of approaches and strengthened partnerships in support of its strategic objectives and regional initiatives. Its dedicated South-South units at the global and regional levels provide support to initiate, implement and backstop South-South initiatives. South-South cooperation is actively promoted at the country level as a key means to deliver on the priorities specified in the country programming frameworks, and a new Quick Guide to South-South Cooperation, alongside other tools, has been developed to further support those efforts.

13. With South-South and triangular cooperation accorded high priority in its Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has drafted its first corporate strategy to scale up its support to South-South cooperation and to accelerate achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The document highlights the role of national capacity and universal access to knowledge as development multipliers in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The corporate strategy has benefited from extensive consultations with Member States, UNOSSC and a wide range of stakeholders, and it will serve as a living document to guide the Organization to further strengthen its support to South-South cooperation through its operational work at global, regional and country levels.

14. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has integrated South-South and triangular cooperation into its programme and budget for 2016-2017, which foresee South-South networks, cross-learning, interregional cooperation and partnerships as key elements in the implementation of its development strategy. Furthermore, South-South cooperation is reflected in its global flagship programme "Building social protection floors for all".

15. South-South cooperation was also accorded high priority in the strategic plans and policy frameworks of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme. In its medium-term strategy for 2014-2017, UNEP has recognized opportunities to enhance partnerships and the coherence and efficiency of its work through South-South cooperation. UNV, guided by its strategic framework, its youth volunteering strategy and its partnerships

strategy for 2014-2017, has continued to mobilize many specialized professionals from programme countries to deliver a wide range of development activities in other programme countries.

16. UNOSSC has revised the framework of operational guidelines on the United Nations support to South-South and triangular cooperation, aligning them with the 2030 Agenda. This will facilitate the development or revision of existing agency-specific guidelines and strategies on South-South cooperation with a view to further guiding South-South efforts in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

B. Steps taken by the United Nations system to strengthen support to South-South and triangular cooperation

17. Over the 2015-2016 reporting period, many United Nations organizations, funds and programmes have established themselves as effective brokers of South-South knowledge and continued to implement South-South cooperation programmes and initiatives targeted towards capacity-building. Increasing support has taken place in the areas of policy dialogue and development; research and analysis; capacity development; creation of Southern knowledge networks and centres of excellence; sharing of data and information; financing and partnerships; and monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

Policy dialogue and development

18. One noteworthy trend during the reporting period is the number of forums convened for government ministers and other key policymakers on South-South cooperation. Such forums have addressed the application of South-South cooperation towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in key areas, including the improvement of agriculture and food systems, environment and climate change, population, health, energy security and smart cities.

19. During the review period, FAO convened and supported a number of high-level forums and events to facilitate policy dialogue and promote consensus on ending hunger and improving food security and nutrition. One important event was a symposium held in Brussels in February 2016 on Integrated Rural Development: Strengthening Women and Youth Empowerment through Jobs and Entrepreneurship, co-organized by the secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP Group), FAO and the International Organization of la Francophonie, and supported by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Community of Portuguese Language Countries. Participants representing national governments, civil society, the private sector and others shared experiences and developed an action plan on how South-South and triangular cooperation could be mobilized to advance the ACP Group's strategic priorities for women and youth in agriculture and rural areas using sustainable food systems. In addition, at the thirty-fourth session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Mexico City in March 2016, participants comprising ministers and other high-level government officials agreed to apply South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation as effective means of implementing the CELAC Plan for Food Security, Nutrition and Hunger Eradication 2025.

20. UNEP is placing South-South cooperation at the forefront of global and regional policy debates on environment and climate-change issues. In May 2016,

UNEP convened an event on the theme "Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through innovative South-South cooperation", which contributed to a better understanding of how innovative South-South partnerships on environmental issues could be leveraged to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Another event, co-organized with the China National Development and Reform Commission in November 2015, brought together more than 150 delegates from developing countries, international organizations and financial institutions to exchange practical experiences and discuss how South-South cooperation could be applied in the fields of energy, climate resilience, smart cities and big data. Participants at another UNEP-supported high-level meeting identified priority areas and discussed practical ways in which South-South cooperation could be mainstreamed into climate-change initiatives and mechanisms.

21. High-level forums organized by UNFPA contributed to advancing South-South policy in the areas of population and development towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Ministerial Strategic Dialogue, co-organized in March 2016 with Partners in Population and Development (PPD) and the Government of China, resulted in the Beijing Call for Action, with commitments to promote South-South cooperation in the areas of population and development over the next five years. The Call for Action recommended the creation of an International Forum on South-South Cooperation in Population and Development, to be housed in the PPD secretariat, and a Coordinating Committee for South-South Cooperation in Population and Development to identify and coordinate support to concrete South-South cooperation programmes focused on responding to country needs, and particularly on matching needs for and offers of South-South cooperation, with its secretariat to be hosted by UNFPA.

22. The World Health Organization (WHO) organized and/or supported various high-level knowledge-sharing events in the areas of health and development. A regional workshop organized in March 2015 by its Regional Office for the Americas, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), brought together participants from ministries of health, international organizations and subregional entities to discuss practical ways to advance cooperation within the region on health development. At the workshop, existing forms of technical cooperation among countries were reviewed with the aim of improving the approaches used to facilitate experience-sharing and enhance engagement in non-health sectors. In April 2015, WHO supported the Eleventh Pacific Health Ministers Meeting, a forum for the exchange of information among small island developing countries in the Western Pacific region, which was attended by 19 island countries in the region. Also in 2015, the WHO Regional Offices for the Western Pacific and for Africa supported the Second Ministerial Forum on China-Africa Health Development organized on the theme "Promoting the availability of health-care service in Africa: improving China-Africa's cooperation in public health in the post-Ebola era". The meeting brought together health ministers from Africa, government officials from China and representatives of international organizations to discuss the future of China-Africa cooperation in the areas of health and development.

23. In 2015, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) supported the Investing in Africa Forum, a global platform for multilateral cooperation and the promotion of accelerated and responsible investment and investment partnerships in African countries, both from China and elsewhere as well as within Africa, particularly for the light manufacturing sector.

24. UNDP supported developing countries in strengthening their voice in the Sustainable Development Goals negotiations and several high-level South-South cooperation policy dialogues in preparation for the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa in July 2015 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015 for the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. It also supported the Government of India in organizing the Global Conference on South-South Cooperation in March 2016, which looked at issues such as South-South cooperation and the global economy, the institutional architecture for South-South cooperation, regional growth and integration, and the role of Southern think tanks. UNDP also organized the first South-South cooperation consultation meeting in Africa in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. Important outcomes include the promotion of policy dialogue on monitoring and evaluation and the inclusive participation of civil society organizations and the private sector in South-South cooperation. The discussion points highlighted in relation to these topics will be institutionalized and taken forward by the New Partnership for Africa's Development through the African Union.

25. The effective implementation of the plans of action resulting from increasing dialogues on South-South cooperation is an imperative that Member States need to effectively pursue with the support of the United Nations system where appropriate.

Research and analysis

26. The research findings and analytical work of the United Nations system contribute greatly to policy dialogue and development regarding South-South and triangular cooperation in strategic areas relating to sustainable development. Only a select few are presented here to illustrate the work of the United Nations system in this area.

27. The periodic analytical reports of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) have been a primary guide for policymakers in developing countries, especially with regard to regional and thematic South-South issues on trade, finance and investment. For example, in the 2015 edition of its flagship publication, the *Trade and Development Report*,[5] UNCTAD highlighted the catalytic role that the new Southern-led multilateral banks could play in changing the conditions and the approach of existing multilateral financing institutions and emphasized the need to include those banks in a network of other national, regional and multilateral development banks and create synergies and complementarities among them so as to improve the provision of long-term financing for development. The 2015 edition of the *Least Developed Countries* report[6] emphasized the transformation of rural economies as a central factor in accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and noted the role that South-South cooperation could play in those efforts. Another 2015 report examined the global value chains-South-South trade nexus and presented options for policymakers on those issues.[7]

28. During the biennium, ILO produced over 15 reports and publications on South-South and triangular cooperation, covering a wide range of topics relating to

[5] http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/tdr2015_en.pdf.
[6] http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/ldc2015_en.pdf.
[7] http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/gdsecidc2015d1_en.pdf.

child labour, social protection and others. Through its analytical work, research and publications, ILO strives to shape policies, including through enhancing awareness of the role of South-South and triangular cooperation in advancing the decent work agenda in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In this regard, its 2015 publication entitled *Triangular Cooperation and Decent Work: Good Practices* aims at clarifying the concept and definitions of triangular cooperation and provides examples of good practices in triangular cooperation. As part of the "Social Protection in Action: Building Social Protection Floors" Country Note Series, 24 country briefs were published during 2015-2016 to promote the exchange of knowledge and highlight good practices from the South.

29. In 2015, the WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger in Brazil produced a series of three studies on food and social policies, with a focus on public food procurement in Brazil and its impact on food and nutritional security and smallholder farming. The Centre is also supporting the African Union in conducting a comprehensive baseline study on the relevance and impact of school feeding programmes in African countries as a continental strategy.

30. The research activities of many other specialized agencies such as WHO and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are built into their partnership networks. WHO continues to work through its network of collaborating institutions to monitor and share information on health. PAHO signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ibero-American General Secretariat to facilitate the exchange of experiences and data, assessment and reporting on South-South cooperation. A programme of work has been developed and a document entitled "Data on South-South cooperation in health in Ibero-America" will be presented at the Ibero-American Conference of Ministers of Health to be held in September 2016. UNESCO continued to strengthen the policy, technical and research capacities of developing countries through its centres of excellence, its professionalized networks (Associated Schools Project Network, Man and the Biosphere Programme, and the International Hydrological Programme), the UNESCO Chairs Programme, and the UNESCO International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

31. Through a South-South cooperation project, UNEP support to Mongolia and other countries in Central Asia to enhance their research capacity in the areas of green investment and the water sector is a model worth emulating. As part of this project, UNEP provided support for researchers from Central Asia and Mongolia to participate in a six-week fellowship programme at Beijing Normal University, and it contributed to a green economy scoping report for Central Asia to be launched in 2016.

32. In 2015, UNV launched the *State of the World's Volunteerism Report: Transforming Governance*.[8] The report examines how formal and informal volunteers are building alliances horizontally across borders and vertically from the local to the global level to strengthen voice and participation in good governance and sustainable development.

33. UNDP in 2015 provided support to Southern think tank networks such as the Network of Southern Think-Tanks (NeST) and Southern Voice to produce evidence-

[8] www.volunteeractioncounts.org/SWVR2015-frame/21337%20-%20SWVR%20report%20-%20ENGLISH%20-%20web%201.pdf.

based analyses and frameworks to inform policy dialogues on South-South and triangular cooperation. Case studies will be disseminated at different policy dialogues throughout 2016. UNDP and UNOSSC are supporting the establishment of the Global Coalition of Think Tank Networks for South-South Cooperation to bring forward voices and knowledge from various networks involving over 100 think tanks to date, so as to facilitate their joint efforts to inform the global policy dialogues and agenda-setting on South-South cooperation for the Sustainable Development Goals.

34. As research and analysis on South-South cooperation grows, so does the need for improved coordination of these efforts to maximize their benefits.

Capacity development

35. In response to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and General Assembly resolutions that called for enhanced support to national capacities, United Nations organizations have implemented South-South cooperation programmes and initiatives aimed at strengthening the human and institutional capacities of developing countries in the implementation of national plans and strategies. Support took various forms, including the organization of training workshops and technical and scientific exchanges led by centres of excellence.

36. FAO continued to enhance the capacity of developing countries through a range of activities, including facilitating knowledge exchanges and technologies, fostering knowledge management and networks, and mobilizing broader-based partnerships and resources for South-South initiatives. To date, its main partners in South-South capacity-building programmes are Brazil and China. Other emerging South-South partners are Mexico, Morocco and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and Japan and the Republic of Korea for triangular cooperation. Over 80 Southern countries have benefited from South-South capacity-building programmes in areas such as food and nutrition security and crop intensification and diversification. Through the current FAO-China South-South Cooperation Trust Fund, for instance, a total of 287 Chinese experts and technicians have been deployed to nine countries in Africa, and capacities have been enhanced through knowledge-sharing and technology transfer in diverse areas such as hybrid rice technologies, fisheries policy and aquaculture feed technologies, tropical agriculture platforms and rural renewable energy.

37. UNEP has organized several expert meeting and capacity-building training workshops on environment-related issues. In 2015, a South-South exchange and training workshop was co-organized with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and Tongji University, China, which brought together mayors and department heads from 16 African cities and their counterparts in China to exchange experiences on greener economies. Another capacity-building and experience-exchange networking session was organized for the focal points of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production in West Asia and the Asia-Pacific region, with a particular focus on sustainable building and construction. Also in 2015, an Africa-Asia meeting of experts was convened to facilitate experience-sharing among experts from Africa, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China on the use of specific enforcement tools and their application in countries, with an impact in strengthening the enforcement of environmental laws.

38. WHO has partnered with leading health institutions in Latin America in the formulation of South-South cooperation programmes aimed at strengthening national capacities in the region to implement national plans and strategies in health. One such fruitful collaboration was with the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz) Center for International Relations in Health (CRIS), a think tank with the mission of improving public health in Brazil through various cross-cutting activities such as research and development; production of vaccines, drugs and medicines; training of human resources; information and communication in health; and the implementation of social programmes. In November 2015, a South-South cooperation programme was launched in collaboration with Fiocruz/CRIS to enhance the capacities of ministries of health in the region in policymaking and development of national strategies in health. The first of a series of capacity-building sessions was organized in October 2015 for decision makers in the areas of South-South cooperation, global health diplomacy, global health governance and resource mobilization.

39. UNESCO also works to enhance the capacities of developing countries through the Malaysia-UNESCO Cooperation Programme (MUCP). Since it became operational in 2013, MUCP has grown into a spectrum of projects amounting to $5.7 million, largely benefiting countries in Asia and the Pacific and Africa. It draws on the expertise of Malaysian Category 2 centres established under the auspices of UNESCO, including the International Science, Technology and Innovation Centre for South-South Cooperation (ISTIC) and the Regional Humid Tropics Hydrology and Water Resources Centre for South-East Asia and the Pacific. MUCP projects include education for sustainable development in Pacific Island countries, building the capacity of Indian Ocean Member States in tsunami preparedness and response, reforms of education systems to meet the demands of the twenty-first century, upscaling water security community-based management at World Heritage sites, and strengthening science, technology, engineering and mathematics curricula for girls in Africa and the Asia and the Pacific region.

40. In UNDP, work on capacity development has focused on building national capacities to plan, manage and monitor South-South cooperation and to use such cooperation in accelerating development progress. It has also provided support to Southern partners in tackling policies, laws and regulations that are hampering their engagement in South-South cooperation. For example, UNDP is supporting Brazil in strengthening its knowledge management of South-South mechanisms, enabling better adaptability to the local context in partner countries. UNDP assisted the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation and the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency in consolidating experiences and strengthening institutional capacities as providers of South-South cooperation. In Indonesia, it supported the establishment of a national coordination mechanism for South-South cooperation and played a pivotal role in strengthening the national institution under the Ministry of National Development and Planning responsible for the management of South-South and triangular cooperation. With the support of UNDP, the Egyptian Agency of Partnership for Development was established to support African and other developing countries in the formulation and implementation of South-South cooperation programmes in agriculture, energy, health, information technology and telecommunication, and transport. In Iraq, UNDP supported the Government in establishing a South-South cooperation unit in the Prime Minister's Advisory Commission.

41. Capacity-building in the formulation of national policies on trade, investment and finance issues is at the core of UNCTAD work. Support in this area is provided through the organization of high-level expert meetings, training workshops and seminars. The Wuhan Seminar is one initiative of the Government of China supported by UNCTAD and dedicated to enhance the institutional and policymaking capabilities of policymakers in Africa through the provision of best practices and effective development policies relevant to African countries.

42. Through its field offices, UNFPA supports around 100 South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives, which, among others, are aimed at enhancing national capacities in the formulation and implementation of policies relating to population and reproductive health. Through its programmes, UNFPA helps Governments to identify national capacities and needs and brokers knowledge with the aim of enhancing national capacities to implement effective policies on population, gender, reproductive health and related issues.

Establishment of Southern knowledge networks and centres of excellence

43. A key feature of the above-mentioned institutional capacity development efforts of the United Nations system is the support to the creation and strengthening of Southern networks and centres of excellence, which have continued during the period under review.

44. The WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger in Brazil continues to offer top-notch policy and technical advisory services aimed at enhancing the technical and institutional capabilities of developing countries to formulate, execute and manage sustainable school feeding programmes. By 2016, the Centre had supported more than 35 developing countries in designing and implementing their national school feeding strategies and programmes. Building on this success, WFP is expanding its partnerships with other developing countries that have rich experience in improving food security and nutrition. On 2 March 2016, a memorandum of understanding was signed between WFP and the Government of China to launch its new WFP China Office, which will serve as a WFP centre of excellence for rural transformation. A letter of intent was also signed with the Government of India in January 2016 to explore the possibility of establishing a WFP centre of excellence on food and nutrition security in India.

45. UNDP, through its thematic centres of excellence, including those in Brazil, Singapore and Turkey, continued to undertake cross-cutting research, document solutions, prepare policy briefs and support knowledge outreach and networks as well as facilitate policy dialogue forums. UNDP is assisting the Regional Hub of Civil Service in Astana, Kazakhstan, in facilitating global knowledge exchanges and South-South sharing of experiences on effective civil service systems, with over 34 countries and, five international bodies involved to date. In 2015, UNDP and the Government of Aruba launched the Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Development for Small Island Developing States, which aims to strengthen innovation and resilience in such States and facilitate South-South cooperation on issues such as renewable energy, climate resilience, water, tourism, environment and public health. In 2015, a memorandum of understanding was signed between UNDP and the Development Research Centre of the State Council of China to undertake various strategic initiatives, including research on sustainable development issues, poverty reduction and green growth, as well as to enhance the South-South and

global cooperation of China. UNDP has also provided technical support to the Government of China in the creation of the Centre for International Knowledge on Development. UNDP and UNOSSC supported the establishment of the Global Research Consortium on Economic Transformation, with 31 institutions joining the network to promote economic structural transformation through South-South cooperation. In the Arab States region, UNDP is supporting several initiatives that focus on knowledge exchange and capacity development. For example, in Bahrain, it is the founding sponsor of Middle East and North Africa Public Administration Research (MENAPAR), a network of professionals and organizations in the region with an interest in research on public administration.

46. Over the last two years, FAO has focused on strengthening Southern knowledge centres: five Chinese research and training institutions were certified and designated as FAO reference centres in May 2014: the Biogas Research Institute of the Ministry of Agriculture of China, the Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences, the Foreign Economic Cooperation Centre, the Freshwater Fisheries Research Centre of the Chinese Academy of Fishery Sciences and the Hunan Hybrid Rice Research Centre. A partnership agreement with the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences was also signed in November 2015. Additional South-South agreements were signed with institutions in Brazil (the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation) and Costa Rica (the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Centre).

47. Discussions with Brazil are under way in order for the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth in Brasilia to become a strategic partner of UNOSSC in efforts to bolster the research and analytical capacity of the Office.

48. Support to centres of excellence for knowledge exchange is also provided by the United Nations regional commissions. The International Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Centre of Excellence of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) is one good example of such support that is created to reduce the time, cost and inefficiencies that hamper the development and implementation of PPPs. The Centre disseminates international best practices and standards in such partnerships and helps national governments to provide training for public officials and other stakeholders. The PPP Business Advisory Board supports governments in implementing the partnerships through high-level national and regional consultations. A number of specialized centres are being established to assist countries in adapting the PPP standards to their local conditions and developing a successful pipeline of PPP projects.

49. Greater networking and participation of Southern centres of excellence in the thematic deliberations of the High-level Committee could help to enrich the application of South-South cooperation to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Sharing of data and information

50. During the biennium 2015-2016, the United Nations agencies, programmes and funds continued to be engaged in data-collection and dissemination of information on South-South cooperation relating to their areas of competence through networks, virtual knowledge platforms, web portals and other tools that were created for such purposes.

51. South-South cooperation initiatives supported and implemented by FAO are regularly monitored and data are presented in an interactive map on its website. In 2015, FAO launched the South-South Cooperation Gateway, an online platform showcasing Southern institutions and experts in the field of food security and agriculture. Important information on the expertise of an institution, its portfolio of South-South activities, national focal point and roster of experts provided to FAO by the national government is accessible through this platform. The Gateway is intended to facilitate direct engagement in South-South and triangular cooperation activities between countries and institutions or indirectly through FAO. Good practices and success stories in South-South cooperation supported by FAO are also disseminated though other online sources, including "FAO's Quick Guide to South-South Cooperation".

52. The Sustainable Development Goals Fund created by UNDP has established mechanisms for knowledge exchange on a wide range of development issues. An online library of good practices and lessons learned in relation to the Millennium Development Goals, including those pertaining to South-South cooperation, has been created for use by the United Nations system. The Fund also supports peer-to-peer exchanges of knowledge and experiences in development among programme countries.

53. ILO has created virtual platforms to gather and disseminate information on issues relating to the decent work agenda. The social protection platform brings together experts from the North and the South in the sharing of their experiences with social protection issues and facilitates dissemination of regular scholarly articles and publications on the topic. To assist the organization of an interregional South-South and triangular cooperation learning and networking event that will be held in September 2016, ILO has created a virtual academy on South-South cooperation. The platform will facilitate networking and collaboration of policymakers, practitioners, researchers and other partners from all around the world on South-South and triangular cooperation issues relating to child labour, job creation, climate change and green jobs, city-to-city cooperation, and the social and solidarity economy, among others.

54. Through its virtual learning platform, the Pacific Open Learning Health Net (POLHN), the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific aims to improve the quality and standards of health professionals in the region by offering free and practical online courses. Since its creation, POLHN has delivered equitable, scalable and localized online, continuing professional educational courses to health-care professionals in the Pacific countries. In a similar effort, the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia convened a regional consultation on South-South and triangular cooperation in 2015 to initiate the launching of initiatives, including the creation of a knowledge web portal to enhance networking and provide up-to-date information to health professionals in countries in the region.

55. UNEP has established a South-South cooperation community of practice to bring together relevant resource persons to develop common definitions and facilitate good practices relating to the environment. Through the establishment of a knowledge-sharing network, it assisted 20 countries (16 in Africa, 2 in Eastern Europe and 2 in Central Asia) to share their experiences in the ratification process, adopt a common workplan for 2015-2016 and share experiences in implementing the Nagoya Protocol.

Financing and partnerships

56. Adequate and sustained financial resources are critical to engage in fruitful and mutually beneficial South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives. While not all organizations of the United Nations system have a fixed regular programming budget for South-South cooperation, many have put in place various financing mechanisms through which South-South and triangular cooperation are supported.

57. UNEP formed partnerships with Southern providers of South-South cooperation, such as Brazil and China, to secure financing for various environment-related South-South and triangular cooperation projects. For instance, through the $6 million UNEP China Trust Fund, various South-South capacity-building projects have been implemented during the past three years. Through the Brazil Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation, $5.2 million has been secured to support various South-South projects across the subprogrammes of UNEP.

58. In the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), most South-South activities are financed primarily through its country programme, project and grant activities. For instance, in 2015 a $3.5 million grant was provided to a non-profit organization to identify, catalogue and share innovative and successful initiatives relating to rural development with countries in Latin America, Western and Central Africa, and Eastern and Southern Africa. An additional $300,000 has been dedicated by its South-South Cooperation Unit to support other similar initiatives.

59. In ILO, about $20 million has been dedicated to support South-South cooperation during the past biennium, while 2 per cent of the UNCTAD programme budget is for South-South cooperation. South-South and triangular cooperation activities are supported through various country, regional and global programmes in UNDP and WHO.

60. UNDP supports integration of South-South and triangular cooperation into its global, regional and country programme budgets. As of 2015, 16 per cent of UNDP projects have utilized South-South and triangular cooperation as a modality to deliver results. In addition, UNDP has committed to allocate an annual amount that will not fall below $3.5 million for the period of the UNOSSC strategic framework, that is, a total of $14 million for the period 2014-2017.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

61. Monitoring and evaluation tools are being designed by organizations of the United Nations system to assess the contribution of their support to South-South and triangular cooperation to sustainable development. WFP, UNV, UNDP and many other organizations have integrated South-South cooperation into periodic reporting to their governing bodies in addition to reporting their activities to sessions of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation.

C. United Nations support for regional and interregional South-South cooperation

62. During the reporting period, organizations of the United Nations system, including the five regional economic commissions, undertook a wide range of

activities, including policy research and analysis, convening of high-level forums for policy dialogue, policy coordination, establishment and/or strengthening of centres of excellence and other capacity-building initiatives that are aimed at the implementation of regional development plans, frameworks and strategies.

63. In their advocacy and convening role, some organizations have worked closely with regional institutions to promote the mainstreaming of South-South cooperation into regional frameworks in the implementation of regional treaties and development plans. For example, at the 20th meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in March 2016 in Cartagena, Colombia, the Ministers of the Environment in the region acknowledged the significant increase in South-South linkages in the region and agreed to further strengthen South-South cooperation as an effective means of implementing the 2030 Agenda.

64. FAO works closely with regional and interregional institutions, including the African Union, the New Partnership for Africa's Development, CELAC and the ACP Group to ensure that South-South and triangular approaches are mainstreamed into regional and interregional frameworks and strategies on food and nutritional security. One benefit of such support by FAO is the decision by Ministers of Agriculture in CELAC in March 2016 to employ more South-South approaches in the implementation of the CELAC Plan for Food Security, Nutrition, and Hunger Eradication 2025.

65. WFP provides administrative, technical and human resources to the African Risk Capacity (ARC), a specialized agency of the African Union that provides Pan-African risk management services, including risk insurance against droughts, floods and other natural disasters, to 32 countries in the region. Following a poor agricultural season in the Sahel, Mauritania, the Niger and Senegal received payouts from ARC of over $26 million in February 2015, for example. That enabled the three Governments to deliver timely assistance to 1.3 million people with a combined total of over half a million livestock. UNESCO promotes regional South-South cooperation through its centres of excellence, with the aim of enhancing capacity-building, knowledge-sharing and research. UNESCO, through its Operational Strategy for Priority Africa, 2014-2021, has supported African States, the African Union and the regional communities in the implementation of policies and programmes promoting regional and continental integration. This includes programmes that strengthen cross-border inter-community cohesion through education and culture and promote the peaceful management of cross-border resources, knowledge-sharing and intellectual cooperation between States.

66. UNDP has mobilized subregional and regional actors in the implementation of various South-South cooperation initiatives that have contributed to regional integration efforts. For example, it is supporting the United Nations Social Impact Fund for the South to use the "blended financing model" to develop public-private-social partnerships in the South to support the expansion of social businesses. In 2015, the Fund supported the first ASEAN Impact Challenge and provided capacity-building to more than 20 social businesses from 10 countries. UNDP also signed a memorandum of understanding with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Development Fund to support social enterprises in eight SAARC countries and strengthen knowledge-sharing through South-South cooperation. In Africa, UNDP collaborated with the Economic Community of West

African States (ECOWAS) in developing the Knowledge Gateway for Disaster Risk Reduction and Information Sharing Platform for West Africa to be managed by the ECOWAS Disaster Risk Reduction Division. UNDP has also supported the States members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to plan, implement and coordinate disaster emergency and conflict prevention activities in the Horn of Africa under the Institutional Strengthening Action Plan Framework. Additionally, in the Arab States region, UNDP provided support to the capacities in the League of Arab States to better deliver its functions relating to regional economic integration, gender, climate change and crisis response. In Latin America and the Caribbean, UNDP in Quito organized and facilitated a session on South-South cooperation and local development at the Latin American and Caribbean Forum on Territorial Economic Development. The workshop identified common needs and opportunities for cooperation on local development in diverse areas.

67. The five regional economic commissions continue to serve as reservoirs of research products on critical socioeconomic issues facing their member States. One noteworthy work in this area is the *Africa Regional Integration Index — Report 2016*, a joint effort of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Development Bank (AfDB). In the light of the paramount significance of data and information for the regional integration efforts, the Index aims to plug the knowledge gap on regional integration by tracking how the eight regional economic communities (RECs) of the continent and countries within each community are performing on regional integration overall and by priority areas, and provides the evidence base for effective integration efforts in the region.

68. The United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) serves as the main framework for promoting South-South and triangular cooperation in the subregion, offering a platform for South-South policy dialogue, exchanges of best practices and capacity-building on regional economic and environmental cooperation. It is managed jointly by ECE and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and includes Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. ECE and ESCAP support efforts of SPECA participating countries through the following thematic project working groups: water and energy resources; transport and border crossing; trade; statistics; knowledge-based development; and gender and the economy. The Economic Forum and Governing Council of SPECA, at its tenth session, held on 10 November 2015 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, concluded that strengthened subregional coordination was an important precondition for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

III. Coordination and coherence of United Nations support to South-South cooperation

69. One noteworthy action taken by the Administrator of UNDP in early 2015 was the establishment of the Task Team on South-South and Triangular Cooperation under the aegis of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), co-chaired by UNOSSC and ILO. More than 22 specialized agencies, programmes and funds and other organizations of the United Nations system have already designated senior-level focal points to this Task Team. One noteworthy inter-agency initiative led by

UNOSSC, UNDP and the Task Team during the review period was the issuance of the publication entitled *Good Practices in South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Sustainable Development*; such practices are relevant to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets. The publication presents 61 successful South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives supported and implemented by the United Nations and other organizations. It will serve as an effective reference tool for United Nations Resident Coordinators, United Nations country teams and other development actors in the integration of South-South and triangular cooperation into national development plans and actions for achieving the 2030 Agenda.

70. To facilitate discussions on how to continue this work and engage in other similar joint initiatives, UNOSSC organized an inter-agency meeting on 18 May 2016 in conjunction with the nineteenth session of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation. Representatives from more than 25 United Nations agencies and other multilateral organizations discussed how the above-mentioned good South-South and triangular cooperation practices could be further replicated and scaled up with the support of the United Nations system in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Participants also agreed on other collaborative work, including in the organization of the 2016 South-South Development Expo that will be held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 30 October to 3 November on the overarching theme "Enhancing innovation towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". The Expo will be hosted by the Government of the United Arab Emirates through the Zayed International Foundation for the Environment.

71. UNOSSC has also catalysed other inter-agency thematic initiatives relating to the Sustainable Development Goals. In April 2016, it partnered with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General in launching the Southern Climate Partnership Incubator, a South-South initiative in the areas including renewable energy, climate resilience and smart cities. The Initiative, which will be implemented by UNOSSC and the Executive Office of the Secretary-General in collaboration with other United Nations entities, is designed to assist developing countries in the implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In 2015, UNOSSC joined the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation, comprising more than 23 United Nations entities and established in response to Member States' call for such a mechanism at the United Nations summit for the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. Other fruitful collaborations include the signing of a memorandum of understanding in February 2016 with the Centre for New Structural Economics at Peking University to establish a global research consortium and with the Government of China in May 2016 to launch the Mayors' Forum under the Maritime-Continental Silk Road Cities Alliance global initiative that involved engagement of United Nations organizations such as UNDP, UNESCO, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

72. Other catalytic collaborative initiatives were supported through UNOSSC regional offices and partnerships forged to secure funding for scaling up South-South solutions, expertise and technologies at the country and regional levels. For instance, through the Regional Office for Arab States, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, UNOSSC has partnered with IFAD in the

implementation of a partnership initiative on South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Agricultural Development and Enhanced Food Security, which aims to enhance the national capacities in agricultural development.

IV. Strengthening and improving the impact, efficiency and effectiveness of UNOSSC

73. In my report to the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation at its nineteenth session in May 2016 (SSC/19/2), I presented comprehensive proposals on concrete ways to enhance the role and impact of UNOSSC as well as the key measures taken to improve the coordination and coherence of United Nations support to South-South cooperation in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The report highlighted how the Office could be restructured and how its work programme could be reoriented for greater efficiency and effectiveness. As a follow-up to those proposals, on 21 March 2016 I designated the Director of UNOSSC as my Envoy on South-South cooperation. In those two roles, the Envoy/Director is responsible for leading the mainstreaming of South-South and triangular cooperation into the work of the United Nations system, the provision of support to the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, and the strengthening of United Nations system-wide efforts and external partnerships for South-South cooperation.

74. The consultations and deliberations before and during the fortieth anniversary of the 1978 adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action in 2018 are expected to generate new ideas and practical ways to strengthen UNOSSC and South-South cooperation across the United Nations system towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. After the General Assembly decides on the option for marking the anniversary, as the High-level Committee noted in its decision 19/1, it is envisaged that under the leadership of the Envoy on South-South Cooperation and the overall guidance of Member States, UNOSSC will be in a good position to effectively provide the requisite secretariat and systematic support to organize the commemoration.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

75. The present report highlights notable efforts by the United Nations system to support the integration of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation into United Nations Development Frameworks as well as their policies and programmatic work towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. I welcome these initiatives and encourage the UNDG South-South and Triangular Cooperation Task Team and the United Nations country teams to continue the mapping and documentation of good practices in South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation, particularly those that are relevant to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals and targets.

76. Additionally, I invite Member States, United Nations country teams and all relevant development partners to support the widespread replication or adaptation of good practices in South-South and triangular cooperation in order to optimize the benefits to be accrued from the application of Southern development solutions to the attainment of sustainable development.

77. Given the growing number of forums convened for Government ministers and other policymakers to discuss South-South cooperation in addressing challenges in key areas such as environment and climate change, agriculture and food systems, population, urbanization and health, United Nations organizations and agencies should, in a coordinated manner, effectively monitor and support the effective implementation of action plans agreed upon during such deliberations.

78. The emerging Southern-led subregional, regional and national development banks make a valuable contribution to South-South and triangular cooperation that should be leveraged to finance regional and other public goods that tend to be overlooked by the private sector.

79. I commend the measures taken by, inter alia, FAO, IFAD, ILO, UNDP, UNEP, WFP and other United Nations organizations that direct their support for South-South cooperation towards the establishment or strengthening of Southern centres of excellence, and I encourage those organizations to increasingly support closer collaboration among such entities through the development or strengthening of their collaborative networks, joint work programmes and funding mechanisms.

80. Considering the increasing number of online platforms dedicated to South-South knowledge-sharing, I encourage UNOSSC and the UNDG South-South and Triangular Cooperation Task Team to design a portal that would enable policymakers and development practitioners in the developing world to gain more access to such knowledge through an inter-agency, one-stop online platform on South-South and triangular cooperation.

81. As the fortieth anniversary of the 1978 adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action draws near, UNOSSC should effectively provide the secretariat and substantive support needed by Member States in marking the event in a manner that enhances the application of South-South cooperation in meeting the goals of the 2030 Agenda and other internationally agreed development goals.

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Advancement of women

Intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilations

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/150, on intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilations, the present report provides information on the root causes of and factors contributing to the practice of female genital mutilations, its prevalence worldwide and its impact on women and girls, including evidence and data. It also provides an analysis of progress made to date by Member States, United Nations entities and other relevant stakeholders towards eliminating female genital mutilations. The report draws conclusions and proposes specific recommendations for future action.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 69/150, the General Assembly reaffirmed that female genital mutilations[1] are a harmful practice and a form of violence against women and girls resulting in irreparable harm. It emphasized that empowerment of women and girls is key to breaking the cycle of discrimination and violence they face and for the promotion and protection of their human rights, including their right to the highest attainable standard of mental and physical health. The Assembly called upon States, inter alia, to adopt a comprehensive approach to eliminating female genital mutilations. Such an approach should include enacting and enforcing legislation to prohibit female genital mutilations and comprehensive prevention strategies, including advocacy and awareness-raising, and the provision of coordinated, high-quality multisectoral services for girls and women who have undergone female genital mutilations and those at risk.

2. In paragraph 26 of the resolution, the Secretary-General was requested to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session an in-depth, multidisciplinary report on the root causes of and factors contributing to the practice of female genital mutilations, its prevalence worldwide and its impact on girls and women, including evidence and data, analysis of progress made to date and action-oriented recommendations for its elimination.

3. The present report is submitted in response to that request. It examines the latest developments from a multidisciplinary perspective, key challenges and opportunities, and the way forward to eliminate the practice of female genital mutilations. The report is based on information and submissions received by Member States[2] and relevant entities of the United Nations system,[3] and is informed by the latest research findings, evidence and data. It covers the period from 1 August 2014 to 30 June 2016.

4. To inform the deliberations at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly and, in partial contribution to the present report, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) organized a workshop on 29 June 2016 at United Nations Headquarters, with the participation of Member States and civil society, on accelerating the abandonment of female genital mutilations. Panelists included experts from civil society, namely, from the Population Council and Tostan, and from the United Nations system, namely, from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UN-Women. The presentations provided updated information on the data and current knowledge, including on root causes, persistent challenges and gaps, promising practices and lessons learned.

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[1] The term "female genital mutilations" is used in General Assembly resolution 69/150. The terms "female genital mutilation", "female genital cutting" and "female genital mutilation/cutting" are also used by stakeholders.

[2] Replies for the present report were received from Argentina, Australia, Colombia, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Malawi, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and Uganda.

[3] Replies for the present report were received from the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). This also included data provided by the United Nations Children's Fund that goes beyond the work of the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Accelerating Change.

II. Global and regional normative developments

5. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1) specifically identifies violence against women and girls as a barrier to their enjoyment of their rights in many spheres. The 2030 agenda states women and girls must enjoy equal access to quality education, economic resources and political participation, as well as equal opportunities with men and boys for employment, leadership and decision-making at all levels.

6. The elimination of female genital mutilations has been firmly rooted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development under Sustainable Development Goal 5 and target 5.3 on harmful practices, which have been clearly enunciated as barriers to the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment. As such, the elimination of violence against women and girls, including harmful practices such as female genital mutilations, will make a crucial contribution, not only to progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5, but across all the Sustainable Development goals and targets.

7. The universal application and the human rights-based approach of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development mean that all women and girls, regardless of their geographic location and circumstances, are entitled to a life free from violence and from undergoing harmful practices, such as female genital mutilations.

8. The 2030 Agenda reflects the strong political will of the international community to eliminate female genital mutilations and builds upon the existing global and regional normative frameworks. This strong political will was further evidenced at the Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Commitment to Action, held in New York on 27 September 2015. At that meeting, several Heads of State affirmed their countries' adherence to existing international and regional human rights documents, including the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, as well as their commitment to eliminating harmful practices, including female genital mutilations.[4]

9. During the reporting period, the United Nations and its intergovernmental bodies continued to address female genital mutilations as a human rights violation. The Human Rights Council, in its resolution 27/22, noted that the practice of female genital mutilations was a form of discrimination and urged States to condemn that practice, whether committed within or outside a medical institution.

10. In his 2016 report to the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment observed that women and girls were disproportionally impacted by harmful practices, which were motivated in part by stereotypes about sex and gender-based roles and rooted in attempts to control individuals' bodies and sexuality. He also reaffirmed that female genital mutilations, child and forced marriage and honour-based violence, were forms of gender-based violence that constituted ill-treatment and torture (see A/HRC/31/57, para. 58).

11. In its 2016 report to the Human Rights Council, the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice with regard to health

[4] See http://www.unwomen.org/en/get-involved/step-it-up/commitments.

and safety noted that rural women were particularly vulnerable to harmful practices, such as female genital mutilations. It also stressed that such practices had a negative impact women's and girls' right to health, and that discrimination against women and girls leading to the violation of their right to health and safety denied their right to human dignity (see A/HRC/32/44, paras. 56 and 98).

12. In the 2014 joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on harmful practices, the Committees noted that harmful practices such as female genital mutilations were often associated with serious forms of violence against women and children. They noted that States had a due diligence obligation to prevent, investigate and punish acts of violence against women, whether these acts are perpetrated by the State or occur in private, and that they should not invoke any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid these obligations. (CEDAW/C/GC/31-CRC/C/GC/18, paras. 7, 11 and 55 (b)).

13. The Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women expressed its concern during the reporting period to several States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women regarding the continuing high prevalence of female genital mutilations. Although the Committee welcomed efforts made by States to eliminate the practice, it called for the prompt investigation, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators and appropriate access to social and medical services for girls and women who had been subjected to the practice. It also recommended, inter alia, that States strengthen awareness-raising and educational efforts to eliminate the practice (see CEDAW/C/TZA/CO/7-8, paras. 18 (b), 20 and 21 (b), (d) and (e), and CEDAW/C/LBR/CO/7-8, paras. 4 (b), 23 and 24 (c)).

14. In General Assembly resolution 60/2 (para. 3), Human Rights Council resolution 27/22 (preambular paragraph 6) and the recently adopted Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS: On the Fast-Track to Accelerating the Fight against HIV and to Ending the AIDS Epidemic by 2030 (General Assembly resolution 70/266) the linkages between health, violence against women and harmful practices and the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV were noted.

III. Context and measures reported by Member States, United Nations entities and other relevant stakeholders

A. Prevalence of female genital mutilations

15. According to the latest available data, at least 200 million girls and women in 30 countries with representative data on prevalence have undergone female genital mutilations, although the exact number remains unknown. In most countries, the majority of girls were cut before the age of 5.[5]

16. Available data from nationally representative household surveys show that female genital mutilations are highly concentrated in parts of Africa, as well as countries in the Middle East and South Asia, with wide variations in prevalence between and within countries. For instance, in Africa, the practice is prevalent in

[5] UNICEF, "Female genital mutilation/cutting: a global concern" (New York, 2016). Available from www.unicef.org/media/files/FGMC_2016_brochure_final_UNICEF_SPREAD.pdf.

Djibouti, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Somalia, with levels rising above 90 per cent among girls and women aged 15 to 49 years, while 1 per cent of girls and women in Cameroon and Uganda are affected.[6] Wide variations also exist within countries. In Uganda, the national prevalence rate is 1 per cent; however, in certain practicing communities within the country, female genital mutilations reach levels that exceed 80 per cent.

17. Female genital mutilations are also prevalent in Indonesia, and there is evidence that they are performed in countries such as Colombia, India and Malaysia, as well as in areas of the Middle East, such as Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.[5] Some of the evidence is derived from small-scale studies, outdated studies or anecdotal accounts and indicates that there are large variations in the types of female genital mutilations performed, circumstances surrounding the practices and size of the affected population groups. However, for these countries there is no internationally comparative and standardized representative data on prevalence, as the topic of female genital mutilations has either not been included in nationally representative surveys on demographic and health topics, as recommended by the Friends of the Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission on indicators on violence against women,[7] or the data has not been published.

18. The practice of female genital mutilations is also found in countries that are destinations for migrants from countries where the practice still occurs.[8] A report by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) indicated that female asylum seekers in the European Union were also at risk of having been affected by the practice.[9] Again, some of the evidence for these countries and others that are not traditionally associated with the practice is derived from small-scale or outdated studies, and the topic of female genital mutilations has not been included in nationally representative surveys.

19. There has been an overall decline in the prevalence of female genital mutilations over the last three decades, with an adolescent girl today approximately a third less likely to be cut than 30 years ago. In Kenya, prevalence rates among girls aged 15 to 19 dropped from 41 per cent in 1984 to 11 per cent in 2014. In Liberia, prevalence dropped from 72 per cent in 1983 to 31 per cent in 2013. Not all countries have made progress, however, and the pace of decline, where it exists, has been uneven. The prevalence of female genital mutilations among girls aged 0 to 14 who underwent female genital mutilations from 2010 to 2015 is significantly lower than that for older age groups; however, this data reflects the girls' current status. Some girls recorded as not cut may still be at risk of experiencing female genital mutilations once they reach the customary age for cutting.[6]

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[6] UNICEF, "Female genital mutilation and cutting", UNICEF data: monitoring the situation of children and women. Available from http://data.unicef.org/child-protection/fgmc.html (updated in February 2016). Based on demographic and health surveys, multiple indicator cluster surveys and other nationally representative surveys.

[7] *Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence Against Women*, United Nations publication (Sales No. E.13.XVII.7) (2014).

[8] A. Macfarlane and E. Dorkenoo, *Prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation in England and Wales: National and Local Estimates* (City University London and Equality Now, 2015).

[9] UNHCR, "Too much pain: female genital mutilation and asylum in the European Union: a statistical overview". Available from http://www.refworld.org/docid/512c72ec2.html.

20. Importantly, it is estimated that the global reduction in prevalence will be outpaced by the increasing population growth in countries where female genital mutilations still take place. While the proportion of girls aged 15 to 19 undergoing female genital mutilations may continue to decline at a global level, if current trends continue, their absolute numbers will be higher by 2030 than they are today.[10]

B. Root causes, contributing factors and consequences

21. Female genital mutilations are practices that are embedded in sociocultural systems. They reflect deep, cultural discrimination against women and girls and persist for a number of reasons, with both commonality and differences across countries and cultures.[11]

22. Female genital mutilations are practiced in the belief that they will guarantee a suitable marriage for a girl, uphold her chastity and beauty or family honour.[12] They are often linked to other harmful practices based on gender-based discrimination, including, for example, child, early and forced marriage, as these practices are associated with a woman's coming of age.

23. Female genital mutilations are also often believed to be a religious requirement. According to information provided by UNFPA and UNICEF, available data from Guinea, Mali and Mauritania suggest that significant percentages of girls and women, as well as boys and men, in these countries believe that the practices are mandated by religion and that, by undergoing these procedures, girls are purified. In addition, among practicing communities, there are various understandings of the negative consequences of not performing female genital mutilations, which include misconceptions relating to the anatomy of a woman's body or to the risk of death to babies born to uncut mothers.

24. Available data also indicate that there is a link between female genital mutilations and gender inequality. Where female genital mutilations are practiced, gender inequality also tends to be high.

25. According to the latest gender inequality index, published in the statistical annex to the *Human Development Report 2015*,[13] all of the countries in which the practice of female genital mutilations is prevalent and for which a 2014 value for gender inequality has been recorded rank at a high level of gender inequality — in the one hundred and tenth place or above, out of a total of 188 countries. Among them, Indonesia occupied one hundred and tenth place on the gender inequality index. All of the other countries in Africa or the Middle East in which female genital mutilations are practiced ranked at one hundred and eighteenth place or higher, reflecting high levels of gender inequality.

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[10] *World Population Prospects: The 2015 revision*, available from https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Publications/.

[11] Bettina Shell-Duncan, Reshma Naik, and Charlotte Feldman-Jacobs, "A State-of-the-Art Synthesis on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: What Do We Know in 2016?" (New York, Population Council, 2016).

[12] See Jacinta K. Muteshi, Suellen Miller and José M. Belizán, "The ongoing violence against women: female genital mutilation/cutting", *Reproductive Health*, 13:44 (2016), available from http://reproductive-health-journal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12978-016-0159-3.

[13] Available from http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2015_human_development_report.pdf.

26. According to information provided by UNFPA and UNICEF, demographic and health survey and multiple indicator cluster survey data indicate that, of all the factors assessed, the desire for social acceptance and avoidance of social stigma is the single largest factor influencing female genital mutilations. Individuals or families who choose to abandon the practice can face high social costs, including exclusion from society, for not conforming to the social norm.

27. While in some contexts, especially in more isolated settings, beliefs that female genital mutilations have some benefit are still common, the majority of girls and women, as well as men, believe the practice should end. According to available data, 67 per cent of women and girls and 63 per cent of men and boys oppose the continuation of the practice in their communities. In several countries, the data indicate that men and boys oppose female genital mutilations more strongly than women. In Guinea, the country with the second highest prevalence in the world, 46 per cent of men and boys believe that the practice has no benefit, compared with 10 per cent of women and girls.[5]

28. Much of this support for elimination, however, is still hidden or private, as individuals are reluctant to raise their voices until they have some assurance that the intention of keeping girls uncut is socially acceptable. Available data support this and also indicate that individuals may permit their daughters to be cut even if they would prefer not to. In some countries for which data exists, up to 58 per cent of cut mothers reported that, despite the fact that they did not support the continuation of the practice, they nonetheless had daughters who had been cut.[14] The fact that support for ending female genital mutilations is often hidden and not discussed is a factor that contributes to perpetuation of the practice, since individuals believe that others in their community still support it and that it continues to be required for social acceptance.

29. Analysis of data from demographic and health surveys and multiple indicator cluster surveys highlights the correlation between the practice and levels of education, household wealth and location. For example, in countries where female genital mutilations are practiced, it is more likely that a girl will be cut if her mother has little or no education. The data also indicate that the prevalence of female genital mutilations is lower among girls in the wealthiest households.[14] The relationship between prevalence and household wealth may reflect the interaction between wealth and other variables such as education, rural-urban residence and other indicators of socioeconomic status, all of which are also correlated with the exposure of girls and women to information and to the degree of opportunity they may have to discuss the practice.

30. According to information provided by UNICEF and UNFPA, factors that influence whether or not groups will continue to practise female genital mutilations and whether or not girls will be cut include the presence or absence of legislation criminalizing the practice, access to health care, psychosocial counselling, legal and child protection services, and whether the service providers uphold the practice or actively support its elimination. Some have argued that economic factors, including the income earned by cutters, also play a role in perpetuating these practices.

[14] UNICEF, *Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: A Statistical Overview and Exploration of the Dynamics of Change* (New York, 2013).

31. Female genital mutilations have multiple consequences for the individual, families, communities and wider society. There are serious short-term and long-term physical and mental health risks associated with the practice, including severe and chronic pain, bleeding, infections, trauma and other psychological and psychosomatic disorders. Women who have undergone these procedures have experienced a range of obstetrical problems, the most common being prolonged labour and/or obstruction, perineal tears, the need for episiotomies, post-partum haemorrhage and maternal and fetal death. Health consequences also tend to be more severe the more invasive the type of procedure.[12] Female genital mutilations also contribute to the perpetuation of gender inequality in other ways, including by limiting women's and girls' ability to participate fully in economic, social and political life.

C. Promising practices to eliminate female genital mutilations and lessons learned

32. Given the significant economic, social and health consequences of female genital mutilations, a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach to responding to, as well as preventing, those practices is required. Such an approach includes the provision of coordinated, accessible and high quality responses for girls and women who have been subjected to the practice and the adoption of laws and policies, as well as comprehensive prevention strategies, with a focus on girls at risk.

33. In order for a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach to ending female genital mutilations to be effective, coordination among, and engagement of, different actors is crucial. A broad range of stakeholders, including Governments, at both the national and the local levels, international and national non-governmental organizations, community and faith-based organizations, academic institutions and the media, need to be engaged in order to accelerate efforts towards abandonment of the practice.

34. In 2014, Burkina Faso introduced an innovative coordination structure, bringing together 13 ministries, women's rights and other non-governmental organizations, religious and community leaders, law enforcement officials and the judiciary, to oversee the implementation of its national legislation criminalizing female genital mutilations. Ethiopia also strengthened its coordination efforts by bringing together departments addressing child, early and forced marriages and female genital mutilations under the responsibility of one national coordination body, an approach that proved to be more effective for pooling financial and human resources than taking a "siloed" approach to addressing each issue.

35. Coordination between different agencies within the United Nations system is also appropriate and necessary in the application of a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach. Coordination can support the development of approaches that reflect the national and global experience and lessons learned in promoting the elimination of female genital mutilations. To that end, since 2015, UN-Women has been collaborating with UNFPA and UNICEF in phase II of the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Accelerating Change to strengthen the interlinkages between gender inequality, violence against women and girls and harmful practices, such as female genital mutilations, in order to address the root causes of these types of violence, which are similar, and develop effective prevention and response strategies for their elimination. As part of this collaboration, UN-Women is developing guidelines to inform policies at the national level and a

training module on gender equality and female genital mutilations to accompany the UNFPA-UNICEF Manual on Social Norms and Change.

1. Legislation and policies

36. The criminalization of female genital mutilations through legislation is an important and positive step towards the abandonment of the practice. The adoption and effective enforcement of laws and policy measures are required to ensure access to justice for girls and women who have been subjected to female genital mutilations and provide them with the appropriate redress. They also demonstrate the lack of acceptance of these practices on the part of society, and send a clear signal that those who are responsible will be held to account.

37. Many Governments, often supported by United Nations entities, have sought to provide an enabling policy and legal environment towards elimination of female genital mutilations. The UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme has supported such efforts in 17 countries in which it operates.[15] In 2015, Nigeria passed the Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act, which criminalizes female genital mutilations and other forms of violence against women and girls. It also entitles victims of violence, including female genital mutilations, to comprehensive medical, psychological, social and legal assistance. Also in 2015, the Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation Act was introduced before the United States Congress. The Act foresees the development of a multi-agency strategy on prevention and provision of services for those who have been subjected to the practice or who are at risk.

38. High-level political will is central in efforts to achieve the total elimination of female genital mutilations, as evidence shows that statements made by politicians condemning the practice are crucial in squarely countering support for the continuation of the practice.[16]

39. In 2015, in the Gambia, the adoption of the legislation criminalizing the practice was preceded by a presidential proclamation banning the practice, complemented by intensive awareness-raising efforts by the media and local non-governmental organizations. In 2014, the President of Sierra Leone declared a temporary ban on female genital mutilations in an effort to halt the spread of the Ebola epidemic in the country. This ban was complemented by an intensive awareness-raising campaign by the Government aimed at health-care workers, as well as the general public, in which the legal and medical implications of cutting during the epidemic were explained. As a result, new cases of female genital mutilations in Sierra Leone decreased dramatically. Efforts are ongoing in the country to build upon the momentum created by the State ban and eliminate such practices completely.

40. Several reporting States acknowledged new or strengthened legislation and policies aimed at eliminating female genital mutilations. Finland reported that provisions in its criminal code regarding extraterritoriality had been revised to provide for prosecution of citizens or permanent residents who perform the practice, regardless of whether the crime was committed in another country. Through its

[15] Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, the Sudan, Uganda and Yemen.

[16] UNFPA, *Implementation of the International and Regional Human Rights Framework for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation* (New York, 2014).

National Development Plan (2014-2018), Colombia developed strategies to address female genital mutilations and harmful practices affecting indigenous girls and women. To address the gravity of female genital mutilations, Djibouti introduced penalties for those found guilty of performing the practices, including fines and imprisonment.

41. The effectiveness of legal sanctions against female genital mutilations depends upon their effective and widespread dissemination. The UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme reported that the publicity surrounding the new national law criminalizing female genital mutilations in Nigeria brought to light the fact that the public in three Nigerian states were not aware that female genital mutilations were already criminalized in those states. Greater efforts are now under way to broaden awareness of national and state laws.

42. There is a clear need to strengthen dissemination and implementation of relevant legislation criminalizing female genital mutilations. Public awareness must be raised regarding the unacceptability of the practice. In 2014, the National Population Council and the Office of the General Prosecutor in Egypt, supported by the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme, trained law enforcement agents, prosecutors, judges and forensic medical experts on female genital mutilations. According to reports from the Joint Programme, legal actions instigated against individuals implicated in cases involving female genital mutilations increased more than fourfold, from 115 in 2014 to 498 in 2015, across the 17 countries it supports. This suggests that the implementation of new legal provisions in those countries is increasingly being accepted and that progress is being made towards the acceptability of not cutting girls.

43. Several reporting States (Argentina, Dominican Republic, Greece, Peru and Turkey) indicated that they had no specific national legislation criminalizing the procedure. They referred, instead, to their general legal frameworks protecting women from violence, which could be extended to cases involving female genital mutilations, such as prohibiting individual citizens and foreigners, as residents in their countries, from being subjected to violence, torture or inhumane or degrading punishment and treatment.

44. Where community support for female genital mutilations is still strong, enforcement of legislation criminalizing the practice may prove difficult. Persistent attitudes and behaviours support the practice, including an unwillingness among judicial and security forces to penalize offenders and hold them fully accountable. It is evident from reports of the UNFPA-UNCIEF Joint Programme that States have made efforts to enforce existing legislation. Eritrea convicted and fined at least 155 practitioners and parents, while in Kenya, enforcement of legislation criminalizing female genital mutilations resulted in 20 practitioners being arrested and arraigned.

45. Challenges to enforcement remain, however, and, as noted by Uganda, take a long time to be processed, with few cases reaching the courts, as many women and girls face community pressure to drop their legal actions. In Kenya, there have been reports of individuals crossing borders to perform these practices elsewhere. According to information provided by UNFPA and UNICEF, in Guinea, there have been accounts of girls undergoing female genital mutilations at younger ages and in hidden settings, possibly to avoid detection by security personnel or by community members who have taken a stand against these practices, or both.

2. Support services and responses

46. A comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach to providing services enables girls and women who have been subjected to female genital mutilations and those at risk to access a wide range of support services, such as psychosocial, legal, police, health-care and shelter support. The provision of adequate health care allows them to access sexual and reproductive health services, psychosocial counselling and urgent treatment for the health consequences associated with the practice. Strengthening the capacity of service providers, including health personnel, social workers and shelter staff, to respond to the needs of girls and women who have undergone female genital mutilations is essential for providing support for positive change on a large scale and for the well-being of women and girls. Support services can also play a major role in promoting the abandonment of the practice by providing information on the consequences of female genital mutilations and ensuring that the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour of service providers support the abandonment of the practice. In some cases, this may involve introducing essential changes, through awareness-raising and training, in the institutions that provide support, for staff who consider female genital mutilations acceptable.

47. A persistent challenge hampering the accelerated abandonment of female genital mutilations is weak reporting and surveillance systems within the health sector. The UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme reported that in Egypt in 2014 new national medical guidelines for managing gender-based violence cases, including female genital mutilations, were developed. These included providing services to girls and women who had been subjected to such practices and reporting cases to the authorities. New Zealand developed a handbook for health professionals on how to care for clients, including refugees, affected by female genital mutilations. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland commissioned six new e-learning training sessions on female genital mutilations containing practical advice for health-care professionals, and in 2016, it published multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilations for those with statutory duties to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.[17] In Norway, all girls and women who come from countries where female genital mutilations are practiced are asked whether they have any special health problems which require attention. In the United States of America, the Department for Health and Human Services has recommended health screening services to newly arrived refugees, and patients can access comprehensive health care at community centres.

48. In 2016, the World Health Organizations (WHO) issued new global guidelines on the management of health complications from female genital mutilation.[18] The guidelines aim to improve care for those subjected to the practice and focus on preventing and treating obstetric complications, treating depression and anxiety disorders and attending to female sexual health.

49. The WHO guidelines also caution against the so-called "medicalization" of female genital mutilations, which remains a significant problem. According to information provided by UNFPA and UNICEF, medicalization is on the rise in some

[17] Available from https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-on-female-genital-mutilation.

[18] *WHO Guidelines on the Management of Health Complications from Female Genital Mutilation* (Geneva, 2016), available from http://www.who.int/entity/reproductivehealth/topics/fgm/management-health-complications-fgm/en/index.html.

communities in Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Somalia and the Sudan. With the support of the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme, States have made efforts to address the issue of medicalization. For example, Somalia is preparing an anti-medicalization strategy to accelerate efforts towards elimination of female genital mutilations. The Ministry of Health of Indonesia lifted a regulation that allowed medical personnel to perform female genital cutting on young girls. Egypt is considering integrating information on the health consequences of the practice into university curricula in order to raise awareness of and encourage the elimination of medicalization.

50. Several States reported improvement in management information systems and data collection, and in the development of tools and guidelines to improve the quality of the services provided throughout their countries. Greece and Sweden undertook mapping and assessment of health policies and violence prevention programmes, respectively, related to female genital mutilations. Finland reported that it was working to improve the awareness among asylum seekers, including health-care professionals, of the consequences of female genital mutilations and available services. In the 17 countries in which the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme operates, the capacity of 13,700 service delivery facilities was strengthened as a result of training and the development of tools and guidelines to prevent female genital mutilations.

51. Many States face challenges to their goal of strengthening health and protective services and systems relating to female genital mutilations. In many cases, such services and protocols fall under sectors unrelated to work on female genital mutilations. Those sectors are themselves facing financial and human resource capacity constraints. For example, girls and women who have undergone or are at risk of female genital mutilations often have to seek the support of local non-governmental organizations, which are the main providers of services related to female genital mutilations.

52. In addition, service providers in many States are underresourced and mostly located in urban settings, and thus face challenges in terms of long-term sustainability. However, Kenya, for example, reported integrating female genital mutilations interventions in other government development programmes, such as those focusing on preventing child, early and forced marriages and HIV/AIDS prevention, as well as maternal and child health programmes, with a view to supporting sustainability and strengthening efforts towards elimination.

3. Prevention

53. The adoption of a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach to eliminating female genital mutilations ensures that the root and structural causes of that harmful practice are addressed through multiple prevention strategies implemented at all levels of society so as to stop the violence from happening in the first instance. The approach includes changing social norms through grassroots education, advocacy, awareness-raising and community mobilization, as well as the specific engagement of key change agents.

54. A multidisciplinary and holistic approach to eliminating female genital mutilations should be informed by a social norm change perspective which takes into consideration the specific cultural context and broader social networks in which the practice occurs. Lessons learned from the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme and the Tostan holistic community empowerment programme demonstrate that in

applying this approach consideration must be given to the fact that individuals and communities who have practised female genital mutilations for generations may not perceive them as a harmful practice or as a problem, and they may have their own justifications for continuation of the practice. In their cultural context, the practice is consistent with their vision of doing the best for the girl who undergoes it and for her family.

55. It is therefore important to emphasize that while female genital mutilations should not be tolerated, a respectful approach should be central to engagement with communities that practice female genital mutilations to uphold their local traditions and culture. A nuanced understanding and an approach that builds on the core positive values inherent in those traditions, such as doing the best for girls and families, are essential so as to engender trust and make progress towards abandonment of the practice.

56. States are increasingly building on existing support, including from the UNFPA/UNICEF Joint Programme, to promote the abandonment of female genital mutilations and achieve their complete elimination through community mobilization. Making visible the support that exists within the country for ending female genital mutilations, for example through public declarations by influential actors in the community, contributes to motivating communities to consider abandoning and, eventually, eliminating the practice. This process gains strength when the support for ending the practice becomes evident across similar communities within a country.

57. Social norm change increasingly underpins national strategies and informs interventions towards the elimination of female genital mutilations with the engagement of communities, civil society organizations, including traditional and faith-based leaders and organizations, as well as men and boys, youth and women's groups. Mobilizing communities and influencing the process of social norm change by engaging key change agents has been acknowledged as crucial in efforts leading to abandonment.

58. In the Arab States, the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme supported the establishment of a faith network across Djibouti, Egypt, Somalia and the Sudan and a joint declaration pledging cooperation between faith-based organizations in those countries. Building on those efforts, as well as a long-standing collaboration with the Al-Azhar University, Somali leaders and influential religious scholars from Egypt and other Arab States collaborated on a declaration that distances Islam from the practice and calls on the Government to ban all forms of female genital mutilations in Somalia.

59. An evaluation from the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme noted that in Kenya alternative rites of passage, as a form of public declaration, were used effectively by community leaders to encourage the empowerment of girls and their resistance to female genital mutilations. Girls were provided with an orientation on a wide range of topics, including relationships, sexuality and gender-based violence, as well as information on available support services. Research indicates, however, that there is no guarantee that initiates of alternative rites of passage will not undergo female genital mutilations in the long-term, especially if their families and the wider community remain unconvinced that girls can become women without

being cut.[19] As the example in Kenya demonstrates, long-term training and mentorship and support for girls is required before and after such ceremonies, so as to avoid stigmatization as a result of not undergoing female genital mutilations.

60. Younger generations are important change agents for speaking out in favour of ending female genital mutilations, as they are the majority in the countries in which such practices are prevalent. Younger persons are also typically open to new ideas and less bound by tradition than their elders. They can also provide innovative programmatic guidance. Interactive techniques, including social media, music, dance, film and theatre, are being used by States to engage and reach out to young people. The Y-PEER network in Somalia, supported by the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme, for example, uses Facebook and Twitter, which has proven to be an effective way of mobilizing young people to discuss sensitive issues, such as female genital mutilations, that they cannot talk about publicly in other settings.

61. Working with men and boys helps accelerate progress in preventing and eliminating harmful practices such as female genital mutilations. Men and boys can be powerful change agents as they can challenge the deeply rooted inequalities and social norms that perpetuate men's control and power over women and violence against women and girls.

62. In many settings, men and boys have been left out of the conversation on female genital mutilations, and the practice is still often considered to be an issue strictly related to women and girls. However, when exposed to the realities of the practice, young men and boys in different countries are increasingly in favour of keeping girls intact and are demonstrating a greater willingness to speak out against the practice. For instance, in Somalia, groups of men are collectively proclaiming, including through social media, their willingness and, in some cases, their preference, to marry girls and women who have not undergone female genital mutilations.

63. Government and civil society groups use the media and awareness-raising campaigns extensively to promote their initiatives and key messages. The media play an important role in raising awareness of the negative consequences of female genital mutilations, and in presenting testimonials about the benefits of ending the practice. For example, Italy launched a national campaign for immigrant parents to make them aware of the risks to which they expose their children. Guinea-Bissau and Portugal joined forces with civil society to launch the "Right to live without female genital mutilation" campaign, at airports in both countries. According to the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme, in 2014 and 2015, over 45,000 media reports and articles focusing on the different aspects of female genital mutilations and its abandonment were produced by international and national media.

64. A global media campaign, launched by the Secretary-General in 2014, has helped to draw global attention to and accelerate support for the elimination of female genital mutilations. *The Guardian* has partnered with several United Nations agencies on capacity-building and awareness-raising initiatives in several African countries, working with political, mainstream media and social influencers to build strong relationships with those interested in changing the landscape on female

[19] Daisy Nashipai Mepukori, "*Is alternative rite of passage the key to abandonment of female genital cutting?: a case study of the Samburu of Kenya*", Honours thesis, Duke University, 2016.

genital mutilations and empowering grassroots activists to tell their stories and reach wider audiences through traditional and social media platforms.

4. Data collection and research

65. The generation of new evidence, including new data, is important for informing laws, policies and programmes aimed at eliminating female genital mutilations. For example, the European Institute for Gender Equality published a report in 2015 entitled "Estimation of girls at risk of female genital mutilation in the European Union".[20]

66. In the United Kingdom, it became mandatory in 2015 to collate and submit anonymous details to the Department of Health every month regarding the number of patients treated who had undergone female genital mutilations. It also established a specialized unit to coordinate cross-government policy on female genital mutilations, collect and disseminate best practice and provide outreach support to local areas. Djibouti found an innovative way to use routine medical check-ups in schools to collect data on the prevalence of female genital mutilations through systematic examination for physical evidence of cutting. This has helped to desensitize the discussion around female genital mutilations and redefine them as a medical issue. In the Gambia and Mauritania, an indicator on female genital mutilations was included in the countries' health management information systems in order to generate routine administrative data.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

67. The significant body of data on female genital mutilations drawn from nationally representative household surveys indicates that the prevalence of the practice is decreasing, although progress has been uneven across countries. In addition, the current rates of decline are likely to be negated by rapid increases in the population of many of the countries where the practices occurs.

68. Notwithstanding the growing evidence, data weaknesses have resulted in gaps in understanding of the nature, prevalence and trends in female genital mutilations. For example, there is limited and often inaccurate information on the extent of the practice in specific regions, such as Asia and the Middle East.

69. Research suggests that rural girls and those whose mothers did not receive education are more vulnerable to female genital mutilations. Area of residence and education may, however, be correlated with other underlying factors that combine to influence vulnerability to female genital mutilations.

70. Data reveal that many individuals, even in countries with a high prevalence of female genital mutilations, support putting an end to the practice. Many of those opinions, however, are still kept private because of continued fear that expressing such opinions and not performing female genital mutilations will be deemed socially unacceptable, thereby perpetuating the belief that female genital mutilations

[20] Available from http://eige.europa.eu/rdc/eige-publications/estimation-girls-risk-female-genital-mutilation-european-union-report.

are still necessary for social acceptance. The hidden nature of the support for ending the practice slows down the process of abandonment.

71. States continue to articulate high-level political commitment to ending female genital mutilations. This has led to a deepening of international norms and the enactment of national legislation criminalizing the practice in several countries. However, enforcement of national legislation remains weak, and its dissemination within countries is still insufficient. In some countries in which laws have been adopted criminalizing female genital mutilations, there is evidence of movement across borders for the purpose of performing the practice in other countries where it is not criminalized.

72. States, often supported by entities of the United Nations system, have adopted a number of promising practices to integrate both preventative and response measures in their strategies to address female genital mutilations. Many have engaged a broad range of actors, including the media, as part of community mobilization to change social norms. However, overall, the number of platforms for discussion on female genital mutilations and their abandonment is insufficient. Such platforms could make it clearer that the practice is no longer supported by many people.

73. There are still gaps in the provision and dissemination of information on available services and procedures in different settings for girls and women subjected to female genital mutilations and those at risk. Limited information has been provided regarding the impact and plans for long-term sustainability of the measures undertaken. In addition, the trend towards medicalization remains a challenge. Furthermore, increased international migration has resulted in the transfer of the practices and also of girls and women who have been subjected to female genital mutilations to countries not usually associated with the practice.

B. Recommendations

74. **The practice of female genital mutilations and other harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriages, that are linked to and constitute violence against women and girls, hinder the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, which are critical for sustainable development. As a matter of priority, therefore, States should adopt a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach to eliminating female genital mutilations to address the social, cultural and economic roots of the practice.**

75. **The adoption of a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach to eliminating female genital mutilations includes not only the enactment of legislation criminalizing the practice, the provision of appropriate support services and comprehensive prevention strategies, but also coordination. As such, States should ensure the engagement of all relevant sectors of Government, such as the justice, security, health, social services, including child protection, and education sectors, and closer coordination and collaboration with different actors, including United Nations entities and civil society.**

76. **States should enact legislation, and/or enforce and effectively disseminate information on existing legislation, including extraterritorial laws, for citizens**

practising female genital mutilations in other jurisdictions, and hold those who practice to account. States should not invoke any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid these obligations and should ensure that legislation and national strategies on the elimination of female genital mutilations are implemented through national action plans, cross-sector policies and programmes.

77. States should provide coordinated, accessible and high quality girl- and women-centred services for girls and women at highest risk, especially those in rural areas. These include psychosocial counselling and support, shelter and safe accommodation, legal counselling, police support and health care, including sexual and reproductive health services. In particular, in order to address the trend towards medicalization of the practice, States should ensure, through awareness-raising and capacity-building, that health-care professionals and local authorities recognize and provide relevant services to girls and women who have undergone female genital mutilations and that they do not themselves perform female genital mutilations.

78. In the context of a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach, States should ensure that the government, civil society and the media continue and intensify efforts to provide information and raise awareness about the harmful effects of female genital mutilations and the fact that this practice still exists, as well as about national and international levels of support for eliminating the practice. To that end, States should organize activities that make the movement to end female genital mutilations more visible.

79. States should adopt comprehensive prevention strategies, including advocacy, awareness-raising and community mobilization, with a broad range of key stakeholders, in particular, faith-based organizations and religious institutions, men and boys, women and girls, youth, civil society, women's organizations and the media, to help change existing norms, attitudes and behaviours that condone and justify gender inequality, violence against women and girls and harmful practices such as female genital mutilations.

80. Given the changing incidence of female genital mutilations, States should intensify and scale up efforts to eliminate the practice, focusing, in particular, on those populations that have not yet been targeted by current national efforts.

81. In order to ensure that a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach is applied to future interventions to eliminate female genital mutilations, States, the United Nations system and other stakeholders should strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of ongoing interventions at the national, subregional and regional levels, to help share, consolidate and expand promising and effective approaches. Promising practices should be allocated additional resources and scaled up.

82. Recognizing that increased migration in recent years has resulted in the movement of many girls and women who have undergone female genital mutilations, as well as those who perform the practice, States should institute measures tailored to the needs of migrant and refugee girls and women who have experienced or are at risk of undergoing female genital mutilations in their destination countries.

83. States, with the support of the United Nations system and other partners, should institute and improve data collection on the incidence of female genital mutilations and associated factors, including through standardized methods that allow for the comparability of such data and for the measurement of the implementation of target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, including in those countries that have not been traditionally associated with the practice. Where it is relevant and applicable, States should include questions on female genital mutilations in surveys on demographic and health topics, as recommended by the Friends of the Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission on indicators on violence against women.

84. States should engage academia, research consortia and national institutions to increase research and support the generation of new evidence, over time, to inform the development of laws, policies and programmes. In particular, States should undertake an analysis of the strategies and enabling factors that have led to the adoption of laws criminalizing female genital mutilations, including the degree to which legislation was aligned with or deviated from existing social norms, as well as an analysis of the social dynamics that have favoured an acceleration of the abandonment of the practice.

85. Given the association between gender inequality, overall violence against women and girls and female genital mutilations, States, with the support of the United Nations systems, civil society and academia, should work to identify and build synergies between interventions aimed at achieving gender equality and those aimed at addressing violence against women and harmful practices, such as female genital mutilations.

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Sustainable development

Entrepreneurship for development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

By its resolution 69/210 on entrepreneurship for development, adopted on 19 December 2014, the General Assembly recognized the important contribution entrepreneurship makes to sustainable development by creating jobs and driving economic growth and innovation, improving social conditions and addressing environmental challenges. The Secretary-General was requested to submit to the Assembly at its seventy-first session a report on the progress made in implementing the resolution.

The present report was prepared by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, to review the progress made on the promotion of entrepreneurship over the last two years. It identifies best practices and measures taken in support of entrepreneurship at the national, regional and international levels, and considers the role of entrepreneurship in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It also covers the need for comprehensive and comparable data to monitor progress in the implementation of policies and in the development of indicators to evaluate the success of entrepreneurship policies.

The report illustrates the changing scenario for entrepreneurship promotion brought about by the 2030 Agenda, and reflects on the relationship between entrepreneurship and the Sustainable Development Goals. Section I presents the new landscape of the 2030 Agenda, and section II reports on the implementation of resolution 69/210 from a policy perspective and presents best practices in the implementation of entrepreneurship policies. Section III reviews the need to monitor progress and evaluate the contribution of entrepreneurship policies to the attainment of the Goals. Conclusions and recommendations are set out in section IV, highlighting the need for a holistic approach in the implementation of entrepreneurship policies and for an active role of all local stakeholders, including Governments, civil society and the private sector.

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I. The new landscape of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development

1. The adoption by the General Assembly, in its resolution 70/1, of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals represents a call to action for Governments and other stakeholders around the world, including recognition of the contribution of entrepreneurship to the achievement of the Goals Governments and their partners, including business and international development agencies, are reformulating and aligning their policies, programmes and services to the Goals. The private sector is increasingly considered a key stakeholder and a critical actor in their implementation and success. In particular, Goal 17 provides for the revitalization of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development and presents a significant opportunity for the development community to engage with non-State actors, including the private sector.

A. Entrepreneurship and the Sustainable Development Goals

2. The Sustainable Development Goals explicitly address entrepreneurship in the Goals that concern ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all (Goal 4) and promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all (Goal 8).

3. Those Goals provide clear direction for entrepreneurs and the private sector in general to become more engaged in promoting inclusiveness and sustainable development. Entrepreneurship is also connected to several other Goals and targets.

4. The links between entrepreneurship and the Goals are set out below in four thematic clusters.

Economic growth, diversification, decent and productive employment

5. Entrepreneurship contributes to economic growth and diversification. It drives structural transformation and industrialization leading to inclusive and sustainable socioeconomic development.[1] As entrepreneurs start and grow their firms, they transform the economy and drive broader outcomes contributing to the global sustainable development agenda. Goal 8 describes the need for promoting sustainable economic growth. It refers to the promotion of full and productive employment and decent work for all. The goal includes a call for policies promoting job creation and full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value by 2030 (target 8.5).

6. Goal 9 refers to building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation. Industrialization policies will significantly raise the industry share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries

[1] United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), "Industrial development report 2013: sustaining employment growth — the role of manufacturing and structural change, overview" (Vienna, 2013). Available from www.unido.org/fileadmin/user_media/Research_and_Statistics/UNIDO_IDR_2013_English_overview.pdf.

(target 9.2), and increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit and their integration into value chains and markets (target 9.3). All of these issues have direct links to entrepreneurship and the need for integrated entrepreneurship policies.

7. Within the Goals, the global development agenda aims for at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries and the achievement of higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation. Governments are encouraged to establish development-oriented policies to support productive activities, entrepreneurship creativity and innovation, including the formalization and growth of informal enterprises and improved access to financial services.

Inclusion, equality and agricultural productivity

8. The importance of inclusion is infused throughout the global agenda. Goal 2 promotes doubling the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers by 2030, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers. Goal 4 refers to inclusive and equitable quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all, including increases in the number of young people and adults with relevant technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. Goal 10 seeks to reduce inequality within and among countries by improving the incomes of the bottom 40 per cent of the population and empowering and promoting social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status. Goal 16 promotes peaceful and inclusive societies through access to justice for all and the building of effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Targeting entrepreneurship promotion efforts among the vulnerable and often excluded social groups will significantly contribute to achieving the global sustainable development agenda.

9. While women's empowerment is contained within the Sustainable Development Goal drive for economic and financial inclusion, specific measures have been designed. Goal 5 focuses on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, which includes equal rights to economic resources, as well as ownership and control of land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources. Goal 2 seeks to end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition through, inter alia, doubling the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers by 2030. It specifically identifies women as a key target group. Thus, support for women's entrepreneurship is an important strategy for achieving the Goals and targets.

Environmental sustainability

10. Goal 7 deals with access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. It includes targets to substantially increase the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix and double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency by 2030.[2] The promotion of sustainable consumption and production

[2] The Sustainable Development Goals acknowledge the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822) as the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.

patterns (Goal 12) seeks to achieve environmental sustainability through waste prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse. It encourages businesses to adopt sustainable practices, while integrating sustainability information into their reporting cycle.

11. Entrepreneurs can introduce new climate change mitigation technologies and processes to the market and influence society's consumption patterns. The Goals also include the development of specific energy-related sectors, including tourism and the green economy. By encouraging entrepreneurs to seize business opportunities in the production and provision of clean and environmental products and services, entrepreneurship policy can help Governments fulfil their commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Private sector engagement and partnerships

12. The Goals have opened up the opportunity for the private sector to become more actively engaged in development owing to the significant financial and managerial resources business can bring to the development arena, as well as its experience in market development. Goal 17 provides for the revitalization of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, recognizing that complex problems require integrated responses. This presents new challenges to Governments, which must consider wide-ranging reforms for private sector engagement. In *UNCTAD: Investing in Sustainable Development Goals — Action Plan for Private Investment in SDGs*,[3] the organization calls for a big push for private investment and proposes six broad action packages. It calls for new forms of partnership for the development of innovative business models.

B. Emerging models of social entrepreneurship

13. In implementing the 2030 Agenda, policymakers are devising mechanisms for stakeholders to collaborate in sustained economic and industrial growth, job creation and progress towards a socially inclusive and environmentally sound manner.

14. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) supports inclusive and sustainable industrial development approaches. Only those economies with the ability to constantly generate new activities can structurally transform and industrialize to achieve sustainable job creation and increased prosperity. UNIDO has also incorporated the dimension of social equity, extending technical assistance and guidance to developing countries to ensure their efforts are sustainable and inclusive.

15. The private sector is increasingly engaged in the creation of shared value, connecting social and economic progress. For example, social entrepreneurship is receiving increasing attention because of its potential to address sustainable development challenges by reducing inequalities and enhancing social cohesion. Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have

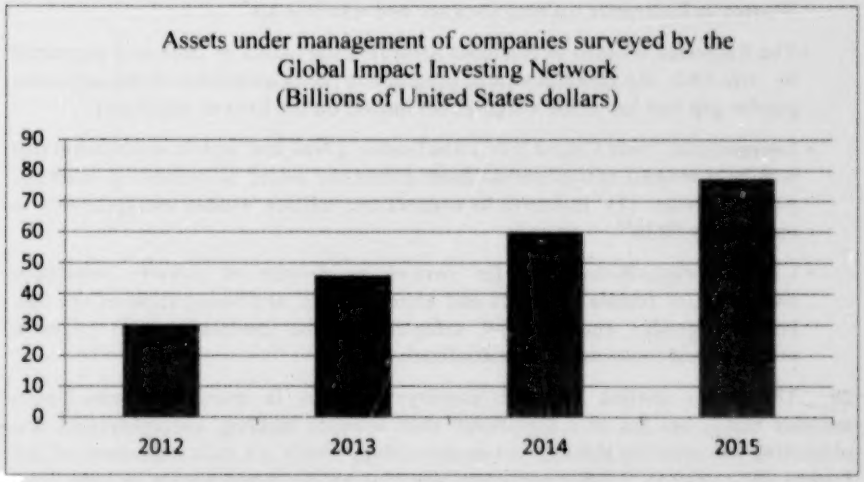
[3] United Nations publication, UNCTAD/OSG/2015/3. Available from http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/osg2015d3_en.pdf.

embraced the concept of social entrepreneurship as a means of engaging the public and private sectors and civil society in addressing emerging social challenges.[4]

16. There is a growing drive for the development of a social and solidarity economy, which includes cooperatives and social enterprises.[5] It recognizes the role of collective action and active citizenship in integrated economic, social and political empowerment of disadvantaged or fragile groups.[6]

17. Significant growth has occurred in the use of private funds for impact investing, which is defined by the Global Impact Investing Network as investments made into companies, organizations and funds with the intention to generate social and environmental impact alongside a financial return. Impact investing is becoming a financial market in its own right.[7] The Network reports indicate a steady growth of this market and increased sophistication, such as the use of standards for impact measurement, the number of intermediaries and the number of investing opportunities (see figure I). ImpactBase is a searchable, online database of impact investment funds and products designed for impact investors.[8]

Figure I
The rise of impact investment funding



Source: A. Mudaliar, H. Schiff and R. Bass, *2016 Annual Impact Investment Survey* (New York, Global Impact Investing Network, JPMorgan Chase & Co. and Department for International Development, United Kingdom).

[4] Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), "ASEAN encourages social entrepreneurship in the region", 30 October 2014, available from http://asean.org/asean-encourages-social-entrepreneurship-in-the-region.

[5] United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Social Solidarity Economy, "Social and solidarity economy and the challenge of sustainable development: a position paper by the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy" (Geneva, 2014).

[6] Peter Utting, "Realizing the 2030 development agenda through social and solidarity economy", 2015.

[7] See https://thegiin.org/.

[8] See www.impactbase.org.

C. Supporting socially disadvantaged groups, women and youth

18. Inclusive entrepreneurship policies and programmes are a key element of the sustainable development agenda which may include initiatives addressing education, training and access to finance and market information. Many institutions provide socially disadvantaged groups with business knowledge, information and advice through mentoring and access to networks, ensuring that these groups have the necessary support to engage effectively in business activities.[9]

19. Increasing attention is also required to address the needs of special target groups through dedicated entrepreneurship strategies, such as entrepreneurship strategies and opportunities for women and youth. Women run between a third and a quarter of all enterprises worldwide and represent 40 per cent of the global labour force.[10] Self-employment is a major source of income for many women in developing countries. Initiatives aimed at promoting women's entrepreneurship include the following:

- International Labour Organization (ILO) Women's Entrepreneurship Development Programme: entrepreneurship training and follow-up support, combining regular business management training with gender-specific curricula through the Gender + Entrepreneurship Together (GET) Ahead for Women in Enterprise training package and resource kit[11]
- The Empretec Women in Business Awards: established in 2008 and supported by UNCTAD, the biennial awards programme raises awareness of the economic gender gap and has made a significant impact on the lives of recipients[12]
- International Trade Centre (ITC) SheTrades: a web and mobile application that will help women entrepreneurs from across the world to connect to markets; part of a wider ITC initiative to connect one million women entrepreneurs to markets by 2020[13]
- UNIDO: capacity-building for women as drivers of poverty reduction, promotion of female investors and entrepreneurs, and recognition of the link between gender equality and safeguarding the environment to promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization

20. The steady decline in youth employment rates in many European Union member States has led to a significant shift towards tackling unemployment and promoting job creation through entrepreneurship, which are core objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy.[14] Other initiatives targeting young entrepreneurs include:

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[9] See UNCTAD, "2016 Empretec Women in Business Awards", held in Nairobi on 21 July 2016.

[10] See World Bank, Women, business and the law database. Available from http://wbl.worldbank.org.

[11] Gender-sensitive training and support services empowering women to start and run their own businesses, offered in over 25 countries. Available from www.ilo.org/wed.

[12] For the fifth edition of the Empretec Women in Business Awards in 2016, UNCTAD received more than 50 nominations from 23 countries.

[13] See www.intracen.org.

[14] European Commission, "Communication from the Commission: Europe 2020 — a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth", available from http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm.

- UNCTAD, in collaboration with the Commonwealth, developed the "Policy guide on youth entrepreneurship" (UNCTAD/DIAE/ED/2015/1) to support policymakers in designing effective youth entrepreneurship strategies
- ILO, in consultation with Governments, will coordinate the Global Initiative for Decent Jobs for Youth (2016) to coordinate employment and economic policies for job growth and social inclusion and to protect labour rights to ensure that young people receive equal treatment[15]
- The first UNDP Youth Global Programme for Sustainable Development and Peace (Youth-GPS | 2016-2020) is a five-year, 35 million dollar global programme on youth empowerment, designed to sharpen the organization's response to the challenges young people face worldwide and boost the implementation of the UNDP Youth Strategy 2014-2017
- Child and Youth Finance International calls for better integration of financial inclusion, financial capabilities, entrepreneurial competencies and promotion of economic citizenship, while ensuring teachers are empowered and equipped with the skills and resources they need[16]
- The European Union emphasizes the role of entrepreneurship in its youth employment package, which includes the youth guarantee, established in 2013, to ensure greater availability of start-up support services for young people. Many of the national youth guarantee implementation plans presented by member States include start-up support incentives for young entrepreneurs[17]
- The ITC trade accelerator offers a range of services to facilitate trade by youth-owned start-ups, connecting young entrepreneurs to international markets.

21. Among the main initiatives aimed at providing targeted assistance to socially disadvantaged groups are the following:

- The ILO "Start and improve your business" training packages have been provided to refugees and local marginalized populations, covering 10,000 men and women during the period 2015-2016
- UNCTAD introduced its Empretec methodology for people with low levels of literacy within its joint UNDP project in Ethiopia under the joint entrepreneurship development programme[18]

[15] This initiative will make full use of the expertise of participating United Nations entities and other partners. See http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ed_emp_msu/documents/publication/wcms_450121.pdf.

[16] Child and Youth Finance International, "Economic citizenship education", CYFI Landscape Series (June 2016). Available from http://www.childfinanceinternational.org/resources/meetings/summit2016/presentations/5-ece-landscape-series.pdf.

[17] Verónica Escudero and Elva López Mourelo, "The youth guarantee programme in Europe: features implementation and challenges", Research Department Working Paper, No. 4 (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2015).

[18] The training reinforces behavioural competencies in low literate micro-entrepreneurs and helps them to identify opportunities; training is delivered in Ethiopia's three most widely spoken languages.

- The UNCTAD Business Schools for Impact project encourages private sector involvement in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by promoting a shift in corporate strategies taught in business schools[19]
- The UNDP Growing Inclusive Markets initiative seeks to understand, enable and inspire the development of more inclusive business models around the globe
- The ILO Start and Improve Your Green Construction Business training programme is designed to develop an environmentally sustainable construction business. It applies UNCTAD environmental behavioural competencies to foster entrepreneurs' soft skills in green construction

II. Best practices in the implementation of entrepreneurship policies

22. Section II deals with the implementation of General Assembly resolution 69/210 from a policy perspective. It is structured according to the pillars of the UNCTAD Entrepreneurship Policy Framework.[20]

A. Formulating a national entrepreneurship strategy

23. During the period 2013-2015, a significant number of countries designed and adopted national policy frameworks for entrepreneurship, some with the support of international organizations, including Brazil, Cameroon, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, the Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Panama, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

24. The African Union is developing a strategy to promote entrepreneurship and industrial development. Its strategy and work programme (2016-2020) on small and medium-sized enterprise promotion and development aim to create employment and promote intraregional and intra-African trade by integrating African micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises into regional and global value chains, reducing poverty and fostering social inclusion.[21]

25. In Central America, the regional Foundation to Promote the Competitiveness of Micro and Small Enterprise in Central America (CENPROMYPE) and the Central American Integration System (SICA) through their SICA Emprende strategy have set a shared vision identifying entrepreneurship as a vital component of growth. It focuses on building national ecosystems, while engaging and coordinating all regional stakeholders.

26. In several African and Latin American countries, UNCTAD implemented the Entrepreneurship Policy Framework with some variations across countries (see box). In most cases, national Governments initiated a consultation on entrepreneurship through national forums, regional seminars, benchmarking exercises and review mechanisms engaging stakeholders. The participatory dialogue between public and private sector stakeholders built trust and defined common goals.

[19] See http://business-schools-for-impact.org/about.

[20] United Nations, "Entrepreneurship policy framework and implementation guidance" (UNCTAD/DIAE/ED/2012/1). Available from http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/diaeed2012d1_en.pdf.

[21] See http://au.int/en/summit/26.

Good practices and lessons learned from implementation of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Entrepreneurship Policy Framework

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development collaborates with policymakers through a network of Empretec centres to support the implementation of the Entrepreneurship Policy Framework. A number of good practices have been identified through this engagement, as set out below.

Identify a lead agency to guide the national entrepreneurship policy

An entity within or outside of Government is needed to initiate and define the policy process. In Ecuador, the Alliance for Entrepreneurship and Innovation prioritized policy initiatives through broad consultations and provided leadership and coordination, including the piloting, monitoring and evaluation of new initiatives (see http://aei.ec).

Establish a structured approach to define and engage stakeholders in the policy development process

UNCTAD assisted the Government of Panama in the stakeholder consultations for the formulation of a five-year plan (2015-2019) for the development of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurship. The plan encourages formalization, decent work, access to credit and entrepreneurial education.

Engage in a participatory approach

A diverse range of actors representing a variety of sectors, interest groups and levels of government should be engaged in policy formulation processes. At a stakeholders workshop convened by UNCTAD, the Gambia Export and Investment Promotion Agency and the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment of the Gambia, Abdou Jobe, the Minister of Trade, highlighted the importance of the quality of stakeholders' participation, which he said would determine the quality of the policy.[a]

Build action plans

In the Dominican Republic, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce established five working groups on small- and medium-sized enterprises to formulate a national entrepreneurship action plan. This included the creation of a public-private sector alliance, the design of a communication campaign, a study to integrate entrepreneurship and small- and medium-sized enterprise issues into the Labour Law and financial mechanisms to reduce the risks of co-investment.

Source: Note by the UNCTAD secretariat on promoting entrepreneurship for development (TD/B/C.II/29).

[a] Opening remarks at entrepreneurship policy framework workshop for the Gambia, held in Banjul in February 2016.

27. As national markets become increasingly integrated into the global economy, the significance of the local context is growing. Greater attention is given to the role

of subnational government authorities and, in particular, to urban economies and city governance.[22]

28. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (see resolution 69/313, annex) recognized the need for value addition by developing countries and for a deeper integration of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises into regional and global value chains. In its resolution 69/15, the General Assembly endorsed the outcome document of the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, entitled "SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway", calling for the fostering of entrepreneurship and innovation and the creation of local decent jobs through private and public projects. The Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014 -2024 calls for the participation of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises in international trade through the adoption and implementation of sound domestic policies (see resolution 69/137, annex II). The Istanbul Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (see A/CONF.219/7, chaps. I and II) identify the promotion of women and youth entrepreneurship as a means to make better use of untapped economic potential.

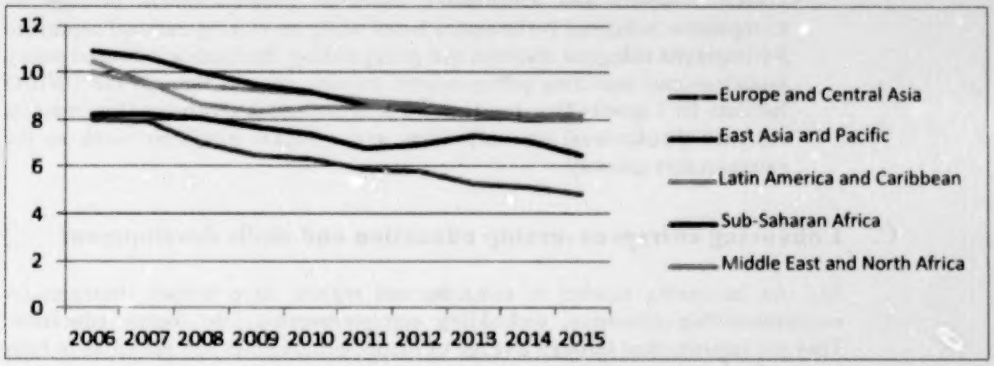
B. Improving the regulatory framework

29. Governments play a key role in creating an enabling regulatory environment to unleash the potential of entrepreneurship. By reforming their policies, laws and regulations, Governments ensure that markets and entrepreneurial activity are not stifled by an unstable policy environment, excessive regulation and taxation, unfair competition or corruption.

30. Business registration has been simplified around the world in the last decade. The number of days and procedures needed to start a business has decreased, as shown in figure II. However, continuing efforts are needed to streamline and simplify other administrative procedures, such as the time required to file taxes.

[22] See www.doingbusiness.org/subnational.

Figure II
Number of procedures needed to start a business



Source: World Bank Data (http://data.worldbank.org).

31. United Nations agencies are supporting efforts to formalize business practices. Informality makes it difficult to collect taxes and limits economic growth.

32. The Global Enterprise Registration portal (http://GER.co) was launched in October 2014 as a joint initiative of UNCTAD, the Kauffman Foundation's Global Entrepreneurship Network and the Department of State of the United States of America. It aims to simplify administrative processes around the world, starting with business registration. In 2015, 28 countries adopted single window and e-registration procedures, while 126 countries hosted information portals. Through the "Go Green by 2019" campaign, governments are asked to put all administrative processes online and make them clear and simple by 2019.

33. The World Bank's Global Indicators of Regulatory Governance database highlights the importance of good quality and well-designed regulations. Greater transparency during the rulemaking process and stronger consultation practices are associated with greater regulatory quality and efficiency.

34. Other initiatives include:

- The United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) helps to reduce the legal obstacles encountered by micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises in developing economies and facilitates small- and medium-sized enterprise participation in public procurement through commercial arbitration and conciliation mechanisms (see A/68/17, para. 321).
- The ILO tool, "Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprises",[23] provides evidence-based recommendations on how to improve the business environment and has been applied in some 30 developing economies since 2011. In Honduras, the Government eliminated the mandatory use of notarial services when registering a new enterprise, resulting in a yearly reduction of

[23] Advisory services on how to assess the environment in which businesses operate, as well as to formulate, implement and monitor reform proposals, 15 country assessments in the last 2 years, available from www.ilo.org/eese.

$5 million in registration costs and encouraging several thousand informal businesses to formalize.

- UNIDO assesses and benchmarks industrial competitiveness through its Competitive Industrial Performance index while developing national capacities for improved industrial statistics and policymaking, facilitating industrial policy processes and providing policy-related training courses through the UNIDO Institute for Capacity Development.[24] The organization also helps Governments establish district-level one-stop-shops and e-market platforms, such as the entrepreneurs gateway.

C. Enhancing entrepreneurship education and skills development

35. An increasing number of countries and regions have drafted strategies on entrepreneurship education, embedding entrepreneurship into formal education. They are implemented through a range of funded programmes and activities in both informal and formal education contexts, for example:

- All secondary school students in Rwanda are now required to take a course in entrepreneurship. The courses include scripted learning activities, skills labs and student business clubs where students work in teams to start and run school-based businesses.[25]
- In Panama the national council for entrepreneurship was established in 2015 to guide development of national curricula.
- A new innovation and entrepreneurship centre at the University of Jordan provides pre-incubator facilities along with mentorship, financial resources and assistance in securing patents.
- UNIDO and other agencies are improving the flow of information on current and future private sector skills needs to assist in the design of technical and vocational education and training curricula that better respond to market needs. Recent examples include programmes developed in Tunisia and the United Republic of Tanzania.
- The European Commission and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) are collaborating to provide guidance on teaching entrepreneurship. They have recommended new, creative teaching methods in primary and secondary schools and a focus on entrepreneurship as a career choice.

36. Increasingly, schools and universities around the world are introducing entrepreneurship education in the form of individual courses and classes. They can take different forms and can be offered either by the institution or by external providers. Character development and mind-set development have been embedded as part of some education systems.[26] Education curricula are increasingly being

[24] See www.unido.org/what-we-do/cross-cutting-services/industrial-policy-advice-research-and-statistics.html.

[25] See www.experienceeducate.org/all-blog/2016/3/31/educate-launches-in-rwanda.

[26] David Scott Yeager and Carol S. Dweck, "Mindsets that promote resilience: when students believe that personal characteristics can be developed", *Educational Psychologist*, vol. 47, No. 4 (2012).

tailored to ensure skills are developed in line with the demands of competitive markets, by adapting new teaching methods and engaging with the private sector.

37. Among the key entrepreneurship and business skills development programmes offered by United Nations organizations and agencies are the ILO Know About Business training tool[27] and Start and Improve Your Business training package[28] and the Empretec training offered by UNCTAD, as well as the UNIDO toolkit on entrepreneurship development for universities and young and women entrepreneurs. ITC specializes in international market access and e-commerce. The delivery of entrepreneurship training programmes is increasingly managed by the private or non-profit sectors: leading accelerators and co-working spaces providing capacity-building are often managed by companies, and entrepreneurship training courses are regularly run by financial providers such as banks and microfinance institutions. Online platforms provide access to curricula and mentorships, including the UNCTAD Business Schools for Impact project[29] and the Tony Elumelu Foundation.[30]

D. Improving access to finance

38. Improving access to finance, particularly for micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, is a key objective in most developing countries, where the traditional banking system is often ill suited for start-ups and such enterprises. As financing entrepreneurial ventures is riskier than financing established businesses, loan guarantees remain the main policy instruments used by Governments to ease access to finance for micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises.[31] Measures such as targeted credit lines, direct lending schemes, equity and credit guarantees could be introduced. Many development agencies assist Governments in that regard. Other forms of finance are also evolving that are more appropriate for start-ups. A recent report by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) notes that there are alternative modes of financial intermediation to integrate sustainable development into the fabric of the financial system.[32] The UNEP Principles for Sustainable Insurance provide a global sustainability framework and global collaborative initiative pioneering research into what small- and medium-sized enterprises and cities worldwide are doing to become more resilient in response to climate change and how the insurance industry can support such enterprises and cities in assessing climate risks and developing resilience plans.

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[27] The ILO tool, Know About Your Business, has integrated entrepreneurship education as part of its wider entrepreneurship development strategy. The result has been the roll out of nationwide entrepreneurship education programmes using Know About Your Business, which has been mainstreamed into national policies of 18 countries.

[28] In Uganda, results published in 2015 showed that combining entrepreneurship training based on the ILO's Stand and Improve Your Business programme (offered in more than 100 countries with more than 6 million participants over the last 10 years), with loans, led to a 54 per cent increase in profits, and employment increased between 45 per cent and 66 per cent Available from www.ilo.org/siyb.

[29] See business-school-for-imapct.org.

[30] See tonyelumelufoundation.org.

[31] OECD, *Financing SMEs and Entrepreneurs 2016: an OECD Scoreboard* (Paris, 2016).

[32] United Nations Environment Programme, "The financial system we need: aligning the financial system with sustainable development" (Geneva, 2015).

39. An array of crowdfunding, marketplace and peer-to-peer lending and other online alternative finance platforms have emerged, using technological innovations to change the way people, businesses and institutions access and invest money. The availability of those innovations widens the range of financial services specifically targeting excluded and underserved market segments and includes savings, credit, insurance and even investment products.

40. The total funds invested for development totalled $9.85 billion in 2015, and sources indicate that almost one third of that global market is managed through Swiss institutions, mainly microfinance. According to recent reports, the average growth rate anticipated for the global microfinance market in 2016 is 10 to 15 per cent, at an average annual target return of 4.5 per cent, illustrating the attractiveness of this segment for investors.[33]

41. Angel investors play a crucial role in spurring enterprise financing. Associations of angel investors at regional and global levels have secured mentorship and networking. For example, Turkey has approved an angel investment law providing a 75 per cent tax incentive to investors, the highest in the world; the Republic of Korea has increased its tax deduction for angel investment to 50 per cent; Indonesia has adopted a sustainable finance road map to enhance the skills of financial professionals; and Mexico has expanded its financial services in rural areas through direct subsidies and technical assistance.

42. Financial institutions are providing such target groups as women and young people with training in financial literacy. UNCTAD addresses financial inclusion for micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises through training materials on accounting and risk coverage that provide advice to regulators in the area of accounting regulations, and by providing technical assistance to government officials with tools such as the accounting development tool, as well as through materials for use by entrepreneurs. UNCTAD assists developing countries and economies in transition in building regulatory institutional and human capacity in accounting in order for small- and medium-sized enterprises to implement best practices.

43. UNIDO has developed an integrated approach combining access to adequate forms of finance for the creation and development of enterprises matched with qualitative pre- and post-creation assistance.[34] Through its computer model for feasibility analysis and reporting programme (COMFAR), UNIDO is providing training for project financial appraisal and financial literacy.

44. Blended finance has become popular, employing the strategic use of development finance and philanthropic funds to mobilize private capital flows to emerging and frontier markets. It offers the opportunity to scale up commercial financing for developing countries and to channel finance towards investments with development impact.[35] The Regional Education Finance Fund for Africa facilitates the sustainable provision of education finance services, supporting secondary, higher and vocational education in high-demand fields. It promotes the development of financial systems in Africa. For example, in South Africa, the Innovations

[33] Philipp Aerni and others, "Swiss investment for a better world: the first market survey on investments for development" (Zurich, Swiss Sustainable Finance, University of Zurich and Symbiotics, 2016).

[34] See http://www.unido.org/youth.html.

[35] The name of the programme is Rural Microfinance Technical Assistance Programme (PATMIR). Available from www.bansefi.gob.mx/Patmir/Pages/default.aspx.

Against Poverty Programme is a risk-sharing mechanism providing matching grants on a competitive basis to innovative businesses with a high potential to reduce poverty, enabling them to scale up and penetrate new markets. In Tunisia, UNIDO is working in partnership with the African Development Bank, the United Nations country team and local public and private sector entities on an innovative form of blended finance to support innovative and growth-oriented businesses. The partnership, Souq At-tanmia, allows young entrepreneurs to leverage small grants as a form of equity to access larger financial resources.

E. Facilitating technology exchanges and innovation

45. Investment in science, technology and innovation is essential for economic development and social progress. Both the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognized the potential of such investment to help achieve development goals. Research and development can foster sustainable development by building greener, more inclusive societies and addressing various aspects of the digital divide. There are national and international efforts concentrating on the design of more inclusive and environmentally friendly science, technology and innovation policies, bringing the benefits of technology and innovation to the poor. For example, UNCTAD has provided countries with guidance in developing or revising their national policies. Its new Innovation Policy Learning Programme has built capacities in science, technology and innovation policies through training and networking (see TD/B/C.II/25).

46. UNEP, with the help of the Global Network for Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production (RECPnet) is supporting 50 small- and medium-sized enterprises in eight countries to embed sustainability into their business models and value chains. It supports enabling conditions for eco-innovation and promoting green entrepreneurship, focusing on sound chemical management, sustainable tourism, eco-labelling and consumer information, life cycle thinking (for example, product and organizational footprinting) and regional sustainable consumption and production work under the SWITCH-Asia, SWITCH-Med and SWITCH Africa Green initiatives.

47. A local innovation system, which embeds entrepreneurs in local universities and research centres, is key to addressing the emerging challenges of housing, environmentally sound infrastructure, sustainable urban development, and energy production and consumption. The UNESCO Global Observatory of Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Instruments (GO→SPIN) is an open access database helping countries to monitor and evaluate their innovation "ecosystems" and compare best practices. UNESCO also recently created a network of centres of excellence in the Arab region to support technology and innovation hubs in the form of science and technology parks.

48. Innovation in agriculture concentrates on social and environmental concerns, focusing on the link between food security and climate change. The increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters requires Governments to adopt new risk-mitigation and resilience measures. Climate change, resilient agriculture and the development of sustainable, yet intensive, agriculture requires innovation.

Promoting extension services, to upgrade farming productivity, have been identified as key, as shown by the following examples:[36]

- UNIDO has developed a training toolkit for entrepreneurs, known as the "Greening your business" approach, which increases knowledge and awareness of energy efficiency, waste management and environmental impact
- The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) youth entrepreneurship award strengthens the interlinkages between innovation and the social and ecological issues created by increasing urbanization
- ILO leads a One-UN project with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNCTAD, UNEP and ITC to "green" the construction industry in Zambia
- The NextGen cassava project in Africa plans to use genomic selection to improve crops
- The C4 rice project is a global endeavour involving biologists in 18 countries to improve rice yields[37]
- Konza Technology City in Kenya has integrated a vision of creating a cluster of knowledge industries within the city into the conception stage of the project (see E/CN.16/2016/2)

49. Entrepreneurship has been enhanced through rapid changes in technology and Internet services. Business-to-business and business-to-customer platforms have grown significantly.[38] National policies and strategies have emerged to help entrepreneurs benefit from e-commerce, while a number of e-mentoring platforms have also been established. Access to finance is facilitated by information and communications technology, on the basis of such innovations as blockchain and mobile money technologies. Information and communications technology-enabled crowdsourcing, crowdfunding and innovation prizes are new ways to collaboratively develop and fund innovations. Modern information and communications technology has been used to improve networking among diaspora communities. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda included the creation of a technology facilitation mechanism to build capacities in technology, including science, technology and innovation.

50. Developing countries have also linked their trade and innovation policies to the development agenda to benefit from the expansion of international production networks. This has boosted trade, particularly in intermediate goods. Some of the most successful developing economies have linked their development efforts to global value chains.[39]

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[36] See *The Least Developed Countries Report 2015: Transforming Rural Economies* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.15.II.D.7).

[37] "The future of agriculture", *The Economist: Technology Quarterly*, 11 June 2016.

[38] UNCTAD, "UNCTAD B2C e-commerce index 2016", technical notes on ICT for development No. 7, available from http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/tn_unctad_ict4d07_en.pdf.

[39] Valentina De Marchi, Elisa Giuliani and Roberta Rabellotti, *Local Innovation and Global Value Chains in Developing Countries* Working Paper Series, No. 2015-022 (Maastricht, the Netherlands, United Nations University-Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology, 2016); *World Investment Report 2013: Global Value Chains — Investment and Trade For Development* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.13.II.D.5).

F. Promoting awareness and networking

51. It is crucial to highlight the value of entrepreneurship and its contribution to promoting sustainable development. This involves changing social attitudes and addressing the negative preconceptions about entrepreneurship.

52. Conferences and efforts that highlight the value of entrepreneurship and talents have multiplied, for example:

- Global Entrepreneurship Week is celebrated around the world in 160 countries
- The Global Entrepreneurship Congress gathers thousands of entrepreneurs, investors, researchers, policymakers and other start-up champions
- The Global Entrepreneurship Summit was first hosted by the White House in 2010 and since then has met annually. The seventh Summit, held at Stanford University, was attended by President Barack Obama of the United States
- The Commonwealth Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs — Asia annual summit provides an opportunity for young entrepreneurs to learn from established entrepreneurs
- Global Money Week, initiated by Child and Youth Finance International, promotes greater money awareness among young people

53. Recent initiatives have embedded innovation and sustainability as the main objectives of the entrepreneurship networks, including the following:

- UNCITRAL has continued raising public awareness and supporting community and professionally based institutions in respect of internationally accepted commercial law standards by translating standards into local languages, creating local databases and disseminating information
- The United States Department of State, in collaboration with, among others, Microsoft, DEMO, the United States Agency for International Development and Startup Weekend, launched the Liberalizing Innovation Opportunity Nations (LIONS@FRICA) partnership. DEMO Africa is one of their flagship initiatives and aims to connect African start-ups to the global ecosystem
- The Water Entrepreneur, an initiative of the Eijkelkamp Foundation, is a new global collaborative platform connecting investors and entrepreneurs to provide solutions for safe and affordable drinking water
- The Global Accelerator Network supports accelerators in growing successful start-ups
- The Caribbean Idea Marketplace is a business plan competition encouraging local and diaspora entrepreneurs to forge business partnerships
- Members of the Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE) in Spain have supported over 415,000 entrepreneurs with business development services[40]

[40] See Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs, "State of the small and growing business sector: 2015 impact report" (2016).

III. Measuring the impact of entrepreneurship on sustainable development

54. Section II considers the need to monitor progress and evaluate the contribution of entrepreneurship policies to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. The very nature of entrepreneurship may make it difficult to measure and compare across countries.

A. Measuring entrepreneurship policies

55. While levels of entrepreneurship have often been measured by indicators such as self-employment rate, business ownership rates or business start-up rates, there is growing recognition that those measures are not sufficient for policymakers. More qualitative measures are also required.[41]

56. The major initiatives for measuring entrepreneurship are the following:

- *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor*: provides harmonized measures of the attitudes, activities and characteristics (that is, aspirations) of individuals who participate in various phases of entrepreneurship to measure differences in the level of entrepreneurship activity between economies across similar economic development level (grouped as factor-driven, efficiency-driven and innovation-driven economies) and geographic locations. The *Monitor* produces an annual index comprised of three sub-indexes capturing the contextual features of entrepreneurship across individual and institutional variables[42]
- OECD-Eurostat Entrepreneurship Indicators Programme: reports on three sets of indicators to measure entrepreneurship: determinants (that is, policy actions), entrepreneurial performance and impact (that is, policy objectives) indicators.[43] OECD proposes five main areas of determinants of entrepreneurship: opportunities, skilled people, resources, regulatory framework and culture
- Index of Systemic Conditions for Dynamic Entrepreneurship (ICSEd-Prodem): developed by Prodem and the Inter-American Development Bank as a tool for professionals in entrepreneurial ecosystems in Latin America to define a benchmark and identify the most relevant factors to close the gap in dynamic enterprises and create high-quality jobs
- World Bank Impact Assessment Framework: a resource for policymakers and regulators to select adequate approaches to evaluate micro-, small- and

[41] José Ernesto Amorós and Niels Bosma, *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor: Global Report 2013 — Fifteen Years of Assessing Entrepreneurship Across the Globe* (Global Entrepreneurship Research Association, 2014).

[42] Zolton Acs and Erkko Autio, "The Global Entrepreneurship and Development Index: a brief explanation" delegate paper for the event "How to make the United Kingdom more entrepreneurial?", London, March 2010. Available from https://workspace.imperial.ac.uk/business-school/Public/JC/GEDI%20delegate%20paper.pdf.

[43] OECD, "A framework for addressing and measuring entrepreneurship", document STD/DOC(2008)2, available from www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?doclanguage=en&cote=std/doc(2008)2.

medium-sized enterprise finance policies and interventions using a set of impact evaluation techniques[44]

- OECD scoreboard on small- and medium-sized enterprise financing: assesses small- and medium-sized enterprise and entrepreneurship finance trends using 13 core indicators to help policymakers evaluate whether their financing needs are being met and to guide the design and evaluation of policy measures over time[31]

57. In addition to the initiatives identified in paragraph 56, the UNCTAD Entrepreneurship Policy Framework provides an approach to and the methodology for assessing entrepreneurship policies in a country, while identifying gaps and monitoring progress over time. It contains a list of 23 indicators for the six areas of the Framework. The Framework provides a guided self-assessment tool combined with active participation of all major national stakeholders. On the basis of the Framework, UNCTAD has developed a user-friendly statistical model and list of indicators to develop scoring in each of its components.[45]

58. Despite the success of the initiatives described above, there is a need for an international consensus and guidance on core indicators for developing country contexts, which would allow policymakers to monitor trends and measure the effectiveness of entrepreneurship policies. OECD, the Kauffman Foundation and UNCTAD have joined forces to develop guidance in this regard.[46]

B. Measuring the impact of entrepreneurship on the Sustainable Development Goals

59. Entrepreneurship is directly referred to in Goals 4 and 8 in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (see table 1). Individual and institutional measures can be used to assess the implementation and success of entrepreneurship policy at the national level, with regard to these two Goals, in which entrepreneurship is specifically mentioned. Table 1 focuses on outcomes and impacts, as activities and outputs are dependent on the hierarchy of objectives established by policymakers at the national level. However, when implementing entrepreneurship policies, countries may follow more comprehensively the methodological approach recommended by the Donor Committee for Enterprise Development. The Committee standard is based on the identification of result chains, making explicit each step in the logic of a programme, from activities to outputs to outcomes to

[44] World Bank, "Impact Assessment Framework: small and medium enterprise finance" (Washington, D.C., World Bank and Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion, 2012).

[45] See http://unctad.org/en/Pages/DIAE/Entrepreneurship/Entrepreneurship-Policy-Framework-and-Implementation-Guidance.aspx.

[46] OECD, Kauffman Foundation and UNCTAD, "White paper on measuring entrepreneurship for development" (forthcoming).

impacts.[47] This approach enables policymakers to be explicit about the assumptions that they make, formulate and monitor indicators designed to test those assumptions, assess attribution and broader changes, and use the results for reporting and monitoring. General suggestions to assist policymakers in locating relevant data sources follow each goal.

Table 1
Entrepreneurship and the Sustainable Development Goals: possible indicators of direct contributions at the national level

Sustainable Development Goal	*Target*	
Goal 4 **Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**	**Target 4.4.** By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship	
Measures	**Outcome indicators**	**Impact indicators**
	1. Increase in the number of primary and secondary schools offering entrepreneurship programmes or extracurricular activities (both technical and soft skills development)	1. Decrease in the number of youth not in employment
	2. Increase in the number of teachers and university professors trained in entrepreneurship	2. Increase in the total number of jobs generated by start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises

[47] The following definitions are in line with the *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results-Based Management* developed by the Development Assistance Committee Working Party on Aid Evaluation (www.oecd.org/dataoecd/29/21/2754804.pdf). See also "The Donor Committee for Enterprise Development standard for measuring results in private sector development : control points and compliance criteria", version VII, April 2015 (www.enterprise-development.org/page/download?id=1842):

- Activity: actions taken or work performed through which inputs, such as funds, technical assistance and other types of resources are mobilized to produce specific outputs
- Outputs: the products, capital goods and services which result from a development intervention; may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes
- Outcome: the likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs
- Impact: positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended
- Results chain: the causal sequence for a development intervention that stipulates the necessary sequence to achieve desired objectives beginning with inputs, moving through activities and outputs and culminating in outcomes, impacts and feedback.

Sustainable Development Goal	*Target*	
	3. Increase in the number of universities offering entrepreneurship courses or programmes in curricula	3. Growth in the micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprise sector contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) and employment
	4. Increase in the number of private entrepreneurship training courses available	
	5. Increase in equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality entrepreneurship education and training	
	6. Increase in access to entrepreneurship training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples	
Main data source	*National education authority/ ministry*	*National employment data*
Goal 8 **Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**	**Target 8.3.** Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services	
	Outcome indicators	**Impact indicators**
	7. Increase number of registered micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises	4. Increase in total number of formal jobs generated by start-ups and micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises
	8. Improved access of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises to microfinance and loans	5. Increase in productivity of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises
	9. Increase in the share of microfinance and small- and medium-sized enterprise loans to women and youth in total microfinance and small- and medium-sized enterprise loans	6. Improved ratios of capitalization in the micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprise sector

Sustainable Development Goal	*Target*	
	10. Increase in employment quality, including formal contracts, improved worker representation and social dialogue, and greater compliance with international labour standards	7. Increase in the participation of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises in global value chains
	11. Increase technological upgrading and innovation, including through focus on a high-value added and labour-intensive sectors	8. Increases in micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprise export of goods and services
		9. Decrease in Multidimensional Poverty Index
Main data source	*National Finance Ministry, National Government, National Establishment Survey*	*National Employment Data*

Source: UNCTAD.

60. Measuring the indirect contribution of entrepreneurship policies to the other Sustainable Development Goals is also important. The Sustainable Development Goal clusters identified in section I show how entrepreneurship may contribute to achieving a variety of objectives, such as economic growth and diversification; inclusion and agricultural productivity; and women's economic empowerment and environmental sustainability. Measuring such impacts can help to formulate targeted policies that may promote certain kinds of enterprises, such as high tech start-ups, and activities to facilitate the impact of entrepreneurship on economic growth, structural transformation and diversification. These policies can also focus on specific contexts, such as rural development and increasing agricultural productivity, or on target groups such as women's entrepreneurship or green entrepreneurship, indirectly promoting equality and gender balance or indirectly influencing the production and consumption patterns in society. The indicators suggested in table 2 illustrate how such impacts can be measured.

Table 2
Entrepreneurship and the Sustainable Development Goals: possible indicators of additional contributions at the national level

Theme	*Outcome indicators*	*Impact indicators*
Goals 2, 4, 10 and 16		
Inclusion, equality and agricultural productivity	15. Increase in the number of poor or indigenous women and men employed in micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises	14. Increase in agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers
	16. Improved access of vulnerable groups to land and finance, as well as access to new and growing markets	15. Increase in productivity of non-agricultural micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises in rural areas
	17. Improved access to finance and technology for agricultural and non-agricultural micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises in rural areas	16. Improved Gini coefficient and social stability
	18. Changes in quality of regulation as measured by citizen engagement in rulemaking	17. Improved governance indicators
Data source	*National employment data; household and establishment data; World Bank (Global Indicators of Regulatory Governance) as proxy of institutional inclusiveness*	*World Bank data, national statistics, UNDP Multidimensional Poverty Index, sector survey*
Goal 5		
Women's empowerment	19. Increase in women's representation in micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprise ownership, in board membership and in management positions	18. Increase in the number of full-time equivalent jobs for women in the private sector
	20. Improved access for women entrepreneurs to the inputs they require, such as land and finance, as well as access to new and growing markets	19. Increase in the productivity of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises owned and managed by women

Theme	*Outcome indicators*	*Impact indicators*
	21. Development of financial service products targeting women entrepreneurs, including green financing initiatives targeting women	20. Improved capacity of women to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities
Data source	*OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index; small- and medium-sized enterprise surveys*	*Banking surveys; national employment data*
Goals 7, 12, 13 and 14		
Environmental sustainability	22. Improvements in efficient energy use, including use of renewable energy among small- and medium-sized enterprises	21. Increase in the number of start-ups in eco-sectors (e.g., ecotourism, renewable energy)
	23. Increased small- and medium-sized enterprise compliance with environmental laws and regulations	22. Increase in productivity of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises active in eco-sectors
	24. Reduced waste produced by micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises	23. Increase in renewable energy produced and used by micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises
	25. Increase in area of agricultural ecosystems under sustainable management	24. Increase in ratio of GDP to carbon dioxide emissions of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises
Data source	*FAO case studies; micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprise surveys*	*National statistics; industrial surveys; small- and medium-sized enterprise surveys; industry surveys*

Source: UNCTAD.

61. For all of the above-mentioned categories of sustainability, it is important to collect data, develop and apply indicators along the result chain from activities to impact. The informal agricultural sector is the biggest employer in the world, yet data on the majority of the developing economies is lacking. More disaggregated data identifying gender and age in rural communities are needed. Data on innovation should distinguish between green innovation and the rest. Data on alternative energy production and consumption are also valuable. To determine the impact of entrepreneurship policy on the Goals related to environmental sustainability, this critical mass of information has to distinguish large businesses from micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

62. Significant progress in addressing entrepreneurial strategies and frameworks has taken place since the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 67/202 and 69/210. Mainstreaming entrepreneurship in national and international development plans and strategies is leading to a new scenario in which the Sustainable Development Goals and entrepreneurship promotion are inextricably linked.

63. Best practices show that an active role for all stakeholders is required, including Governments and their institutions as well as other stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector. A holistic approach is needed.

64. Governments should continue to create an environment more conducive to business for entrepreneurs by improving the quality of legislation, enforcement and information. The use of information and communications technology has made it easier to start new enterprises, reducing administrative burdens by simplifying procedures. Entrepreneur networks have consolidated, and better links have been forged between entrepreneurship and innovation.

65. Lack of access to finance is still the top constraint facing entrepreneurs. Policies, programmes and services should develop innovative financing mechanisms, strengthen institutions and improve creditor and borrower procedures. Policies should reflect the heterogeneity of the enterprise community, their different support needs and development stages. Specific policies should target, inter alia, women, youth and vulnerable groups. Policymakers should build entrepreneurship ecosystems for the 2030 Agenda. They could include the creation of a policy toolbox to mobilize investment, sustainable business models and pilot projects, starting small and expanding when solutions have been tested and found successful.

66. Entrepreneurs can develop effective and simple solutions in the areas of utility services, education, health care, environment and pro-poor business models. While there is still a need to accelerate the implementation of communication and power infrastructures in many developing countries, along with advances in information and communications technology, there is a growing opportunity to harness the potential of new businesses, improve the productivity of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises and develop the networks and sale channels they need, including e-commerce.

67. Robust, comprehensive and timely data and indicators, such as those proposed in tables 1 and 2, are important for policy formulation and review. The practice of more rigorous monitoring and measurement of results should be used to determine the impact of entrepreneurship policies. This may require the use of control groups and the identification of success and failures. There is a need for quantitative and qualitative output and impact assessment and the sharing of good practices in entrepreneurship, including indicators to measure the contribution of entrepreneurship to the Sustainable Development Goals. More information is also needed to guide reforms in business registration, trade and the labour market.

68. The High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development, as the central platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, should include discussions on entrepreneurship to advance intergovernmental guidance for implementing entrepreneurial strategies that are better and have a greater impact.

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New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

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Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/292, reviews progress made in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/65/152-S/2010/526).

The present report covers the period from July 2015 to June 2016 and highlights major developments regarding peace and security and its interaction with socioeconomic development in Africa. It examines the progress made by the United Nations system in implementing key priority areas identified in the review report, as well as the support the Organization has been providing in the implementation of the peace and security priorities contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union and its first 10-year implementation plan (2014-2023).

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Consistent with the mandate of General Assembly resolution 70/292 to develop policy proposals on persistent and emerging challenges confronting Africa, the present report addresses the issue of women's human rights as the basis for sustainable peace and security in Africa. That thematic focus aligns with the African Union's declared theme for 2016, the "African Year of Human Rights with Particular Focus on the Rights of Women". The report also presents concrete recommendations to, inter alia, uphold and enhance the rights and roles of women as key drivers and partners in the quest to achieve, in particular, the Agenda 2063 goal of "silencing the guns by 2020" to end all wars in Africa by 2020, as well as Goal 5, on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and Goal 16, on peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice and effective and accountable institutions, of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

I. Introduction

1. Following a request from the Security Council (S/PRST/1997/46), my predecessor undertook, in 1998, a comprehensive analysis of the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The subsequent report proposed specific measures to significantly reduce conflict, build peace and promote inclusive development in Africa (see A/52/871-S/1998/318).

2. In its resolution 63/304, the General Assembly requested me to submit a report reviewing the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the 1998 report. Following broad-based consultations, including with the United Nations system through the Interdepartmental Task Force on African Affairs, coordinated by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, I issued a review report outlining progress, recommendations and proposals for a renewed engagement with Africa (see A/65/152-S/2010/526).

3. Pursuant to additional requests of the General Assembly, in its successive resolutions on the subject, I continue to submit annually a progress report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, focusing, inter alia, on persistent and emerging challenges and innovative solutions and measures for their redress. In that context and in support of the decision of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union to declare 2016 the "African Year of Human Rights with Particular Focus on the Rights of Women", the present report focuses on the important role of women's human rights in advancing sustainable peace and security in Africa.

4. The report highlights the complementarities and synergies between the gender equality and women's empowerment aspirations and goals contained in Agenda 2063 and its first 10-year implementation plan, and those of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It underscores the importance of ensuring the full rights of African women and girls in peace and security, including in the implementation of the outcomes of the 2015 reviews of United Nations peace operations and the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and the Global Study and High-level review of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, as well as the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit.

II. Year in review

5. During the review period, there were major thematic and country-specific developments regarding peace and security in Africa. Thematically, we embarked on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which recognizes Africa's specific challenges and reaffirms the importance of supporting Agenda 2063 and the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The 2030 Agenda also underscores the significance of respecting women's rights and promoting gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls as the basis for progress across all its goals and targets.

6. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 are complementary, demonstrating a shared vision and commitment to the pursuit of inclusive, sustainable development. Both agendas share similar strategic principles, focusing on people, peace, justice, human rights, prosperity, environmental sustainability and mutually accountable partnerships. Their effective implementation

in Africa will necessitate not only strong political will, leadership and accountability, but also joint approaches at operational levels to ensure harmonization and the maximization of resources. For Africa, implementation of the 2030 Agenda must go hand-in-hand with the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063, especially given Africa's invaluable inputs to the 2030 Agenda through its Common African Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

7. For its part, Africa continued popularizing its transformative Agenda 2063 in ways that established alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The African Union made progress in fast-tracking implementation of the 12 flagship projects in the first 10-year implementation plan, including on silencing the guns by 2020 and establishing an African human security index.

8. In just a year, Agenda 2063 has become quite pivotal for mobilizing renewed support for Africa's peace, security and sustainable development priorities. It is becoming instrumental for promoting solidarity and a sense of shared responsibility among African governments, regional and subregional organizations, civil society, the private sector, diasporas, Africa's development partners and the international community towards achieving the "Africa We Want". By declaring 2016 the "Year of Human Rights with Particular Focus on the Rights of Women", the African Union reaffirmed that women and girls are key pillars and drivers for the implementation of Agenda 2063.

9. In addition, the African Union presented Common African Positions on the 2015 reviews of United Nations peace operations and the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and on the Global Study and High-level review of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. Those reviews collectively demonstrated the enhanced and crucial roles of women in all aspects of peace and security, as also recognized by the Security Council in its resolution 2242 (2015). Given current migration challenges, vis-à-vis their effects on peace and security in Africa, the African Union adopted its Common African Position on Humanitarian Effectiveness, which contributed to the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016 and outlined a road map for addressing forced displacement in Africa.

10. As highlighted in my report on the New Partnership for Africa's Development and progress in its implementation and international support, (A/71/189), economic growth remained strong on the continent and, according to the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), is projected to increase to 4.3 per cent in 2016, from 3.7 per cent in 2015. However, to meet Africa's aspirations for peace and prosperity, economic growth must be inclusive and targeted at addressing pressing challenges such as poverty, inequality, corruption, youth unemployment, poor natural resource governance and illicit financial flows, which contribute to exacerbating fragility, instability and conflicts and to facilitating terrorism and violent extremism.

11. On governance, the African Peer Review Mechanism launched a revitalization process in January 2016 aimed at enhancing its institutional, financial and human capacities and strengthening its monitoring activity and methodology to improve good governance on the continent. Outreach activities were undertaken to bolster the membership of African countries in the Mechanism and to solicit support from the international community for its activities.

12. With regard to country-specific situations, elections were conducted in a number of African countries. The introduction of electoral gender quotas in a number of West African countries increased the participation and representation of women in electoral processes and political office. In the Central African Republic, following presidential elections and restoration of constitutional order, the African Union lifted the suspension of participation by the Central African Republic in its activities and reinstated the country into the Union on 31 March 2016. The country's post-transition process will require a focus on, inter alia, an inclusive governance process that will promote reconciliation, the rule of law and human rights, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, security sector reform and a zero-tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse.

13. Following the visit of the Security Council in January 2016, I undertook a mission to Burundi in February to support efforts to resolve the Burundian political crisis. The United Nations Peacebuilding Fund provided $2.3 million in direct support to the African Union Commission for the African Union human rights observers in Burundi, and $300,000 to the field presence in Burundi of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) for training and joint monitoring missions with the African Union.

14. The Government of Burundi must genuinely address the political and security situation, guarantee human rights and all fundamental freedoms and ensure accountability for sexual violence. The Government and other stakeholders should cooperate with the African Union human rights observers and fully commit to the ongoing regional efforts, led by the East African Community, to relaunch an inclusive and genuine inter-Burundian dialogue and mediation process. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2279 (2016), in consultation with the Government and in coordination with the African Union, I presented options in my letter dated 15 April 2016 (S/2016/352) for the deployment of a United Nations police contribution to Burundi to increase the capacity of the Organization to monitor the security situation, promote human rights and advance the rule of law, in compliance with its human rights due diligence policy.

15. The Federal Government of Somalia and the leadership of its regional administrations made progress towards forging a federal State. In April 2016, they agreed on detailed modalities for conducting an electoral process to choose the next federal parliament, including committing to a 30 per cent quota for women for which discussion on delivery modalities is ongoing. The country's federal map is now nearly complete, though the one remaining state formation process in Hiraan and Middle Shabelle regions encountered delays, and talks between the Federal Government and the Somaliland administration remained suspended. The next federal institutions will no doubt have enormous responsibilities, including for completing the constitutional review and ensuring delivery on the commitment to hold universal elections in 2020.

16. Regarding the security situation, Al-Shabaab remains a potent threat, while Somali security institutions have developed more slowly than hoped, despite considerable international support. In April 2016, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali National Army resumed offensive operations under Operation Juba Corridor to destroy Al-Shabaab strongholds and cut their supply routes. However, both forces continue to face challenges, including with respect to ensuring predictable funding for troops. A comprehensive approach is

needed to shore up the security of Somalia, including by ensuring sustained support for AMISOM; active engagement by the country's leadership, which approved a draft national security policy in June 2016 to finalize a federal security architecture and extend State authority country-wide; and the undertaking of broad-based efforts to counter violent extremism. Coherent and sustained support from the country's international partners, including the United Nations system through the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia, will be essential in the coming years.

17. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, political tensions are rising amid delays in preparations for the November 2016 presidential and legislative elections. All stakeholders must shun violence and engage constructively in an inclusive national dialogue aimed at reaching a consensus on the electoral process. The Government is primarily responsible for creating conditions conducive to the conduct of transparent, credible and inclusive elections, and must prioritize the protection of civilians, the promotion of human rights and the rule of law and the neutralization of all rebel and armed groups.

18. In South Sudan, the resumption of fighting between the Sudan People's Liberation Army and the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition, in Juba on 8 July 2016, undermines the peace process. The failure in the security arrangements, in particular the demilitarization of Juba, will require at the very least a renegotiation of the security provisions in the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. It will be of critical importance to prioritize the political track, and for the ongoing mediation process, led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), to identify ways of ensuring durable political solutions.

19. As far as relations between South Sudan and the Sudan are concerned, the implementation of many aspects of the Cooperation Agreement between the Republic of the Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan of September 2012 is still pending. Both countries, in cooperation with the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, need to resume negotiations to reach an agreement on the final status of the Abyei area. In particular, meetings of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee should be convened, and the Abyei Area Administration and Council and the Abyei Police Service should be established to take over policing functions in the area.

20. The situation in Darfur remained largely unchanged owing to limited progress towards a comprehensive and sustainable political solution, continued fighting between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid in Jebel Marra and persistent intercommunal violence. Approximately 80,000 people have been confirmed displaced since the beginning of 2016, while an additional 127,000 have been reported displaced but not verified by humanitarian actors owing to access restrictions. The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur continued to face considerable challenges in implementing its mandate, including armed attacks and other criminal acts, denials of access and freedom of movement, as well as denials and delays in the issuance of visas for international civilian staff and the clearance of shipment containers by the Government of the Sudan.

21. During the period under review, terrorism and violent extremism remained serious threats to peace and security in Africa. Two additional countries, Burkina

Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, experienced terrorist attacks. In Egypt and Tunisia, terrorist activities adversely affected the tourism sectors. In Libya, counter-terrorism measures by the United Nations and the Government of National Accord included efforts to implement an arms embargo and curb and prevent illicit oil exports, which is a source of financing for the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

22. The Multinational Joint Task Force, under the auspices of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and Benin, continued their offensive to combat Boko Haram. That resulted in the destruction of many terrorist camps, bomb-making factories and logistics warehouses in the Sambisa Forest in northern Nigeria, as well as the killing and arrest of hundreds of Boko Haram fighters. However, despite progress, challenges remain. Some 2.8 million people remain displaced in the Lake Chad Basin Commission region and 20 million people are experiencing food insecurity. There are continued allegations of human rights abuses by State security forces and growing calls for inclusive development to address the root causes of Boko Haram's emergence.

23. As stated in my last report on the situation in Mali (see S/2016/498), limited progress was made towards the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation. Meanwhile, on 19 June 2016, the Government and signatory armed groups signed a memorandum of understanding on the modalities for the establishment of interim authorities. Also, the President appointed a High Representative to follow up on the peace agreement. While there have been no violations of the ceasefire since August 2015, the overall security situation remains a concern owing to the continued activities of terrorist and violent extremist groups. In its resolution 2295 (2016), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) until 30 June 2017 and authorized the increase of its uniformed personnel by 2,529.

Enhanced focus on the nexus of peace, security and development

24. In a landmark development, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 both underscore the importance of the peace-security-development nexus by integrating development, peace, security and human rights goals and priorities. The new approach enhances the ability of Africa and the international community to tackle conflicts in a holistic manner, including by focusing more on prevention and addressing the political and socioeconomic root causes and drivers of violent conflicts.

25. To that end, throughout my engagements with countries in the region I have advocated for an integrated approach to the delivery of United Nations support to Africa. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I strongly emphasized that message at the Private Sector Investment Conference for the Great Lakes Region, in Kinshasa in February 2016, which identified regional investment opportunities, reviewed the investment climate and fostered public-private dialogue on business and job creation, in line with the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region.

26. In March 2016, I visited Tunisia with the Presidents of the World Bank and the Islamic Development Bank Group. During the visit we met with government leaders and representatives of both the private sector and civil society, and emphasized the need for balancing the pursuit of security with economic reforms in order to restore

investor confidence and stimulate the creation of decent jobs, especially for Tunisian youth.

III. Implementation of the recommendations contained in the review report

27. The present section highlights recent actions undertaken by the United Nations system to implement recommendations contained in the review report.

A. Institutional cooperation

28. During Africa Week in October 2015, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and its strategic partners (ECA and the Department of Public Information) partnered with the African Union, the Planning and Coordinating Agency of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the African Peer Review Mechanism, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the regional economic communities to organize high-level events that provided an effective platform for highlighting synergies between the peace and development aspirations, goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063. The seventeenth session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa, in April 2016, also generated recommendations for enhancing United Nations support to the African Union in implementing Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals in ways that demonstrate the peace-security-development nexus. The Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa is also reconfiguring its clusters to align with the priorities of Agenda 2063 and has called upon the United Nations to take necessary measures to further enhance its cooperation with the African Union, especially in the context of the implementation of Agenda 2063 and of the renewed framework for the United Nations-African Union Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda, which was already adopted by the African Union.

29. To commemorate the tenth anniversary of the annual joint consultative meeting of the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council in May 2016, both Councils discussed milestones and modalities for developing a more strategic and effective partnership. The United Nations Office to the African Union continued to strengthen the relationship with the African Union Commission across the conflict cycle, in line with the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security of 2014, including through the establishment of joint teams to conduct horizon scanning, develop shared analysis on emerging and existing conflicts and, where feasible, common positions.

B. Conflict prevention, peacekeeping and conflict management

30. As part of the Joint Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Department of Political Affairs, 14 Peace and Development Advisers were deployed across the continent to provide substantive technical advice on addressing the multifaceted root causes of conflicts. The United Nations Children's Fund piloted eduTrac, a digital platform, which enhanced the national capabilities for conflict-

sensitive and risk-informed programming of Uganda. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) supported national land policy implementation processes in Uganda, which have proven to be instrumental in preventing land-related disputes. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is developing a strategy on the sustainable use of natural resources to improve community livelihoods and property rights for people displaced by conflicts in the Great Lakes region.

31. The United Nations Office to the African Union and the African Union Commission continued to implement their joint programme to operationalize the African Standby Force. More than 5,000 military, police and civilian personnel participated in the Amani programme's Africa II field training exercise in South Africa from October to November 2015. During the exercise, four of the five regional standby forces, with the exception of the North African Standby Force, declared full operational readiness.

32. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) strengthened its partnership with the Office of the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Women, Peace and Security in addressing women's underrepresentation in mediation processes. Both organizations enhanced the strategic inclusion of women mediators in conflict resolution and peace processes across Africa. In Burundi, UN-Women supported a nationwide network of 516 women mediators who collaborated with community and religious leaders to address local conflicts related to the current political crisis.

C. Post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery

33. The Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security convened a wide range of stakeholders in August 2015 to discuss the vital role of young people in sustaining peace. The Forum was jointly organized by several United Nations entities and civil society partners, including the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and the Peacebuilding Support Office. The Forum's Amman Declaration and the advocacy activities of the Sub-Working Group on Youth and Peacebuilding laid the groundwork for the adoption of resolution 2250 (2015) by the Security Council in December 2015. The resolution, inter alia, calls for increased and inclusive representation of youth in all processes to prevent and resolve conflicts, build peace and counter violent extremism.

34. In May 2016, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the African Union Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office organized a high-level meeting, entitled "Sustaining peace: mechanisms, partnerships and the future of peacebuilding in Africa", to sustain the political momentum for peacebuilding in Africa and discuss effective ways to implement the outcome of the 2015 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. The meeting outlined proposals for strengthening peacebuilding partnerships between the United Nations and the African Union/AfDB/regional economic communities, and called for adequate and predictable financing for peacebuilding, including for the Peacebuilding Fund and African peacebuilding tools and instruments. The meeting welcomed the pledging conference for peacebuilding financing, scheduled for September 2016, to mobilize donor support for the Peacebuilding Fund, consistent with General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016).

D. Sustained economic growth and sustainable development

35. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) adopted new initiatives in July 2015 to support its member States in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. The initiatives aim at strengthening national capacities for domestic resource mobilization and public spending efficiency, bolstering support for fragile and conflict affected States and providing policy advice and technical assistance to tackle macroeconomic challenges. Additionally, IMF strengthened the financial safety net for low-income countries by increasing access to all its concessional facilities by 50 per cent. The International Labour Organization developed a strategy for engaging fragile States in Africa, focusing on employment, labour rights, social protection and institution-building.

36. In September 2015, the International Fund for Agricultural Development approved $57 million for a rural development project, co-financed by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries Fund for International Development, to support the post-crisis decent rural livelihoods programme of Madagascar. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and IGAD provided technical, analytical and capacity development support in food security, nutrition and resilience analysis to IGAD countries, highlighting the effects of climate change in exacerbating food insecurity, resource scarcity and conflicts.

E. Human rights and humanitarian affairs

37. OHCHR field presences supported governments, civil society and other actors in addressing human rights concerns at regional and national levels. OHCHR assisted various United Nations assessment missions in implementing the Human Rights Up Front initiative, including by deploying human rights officers to Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Congo, Guinea and Lesotho.

38. In November 2015, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the International Organization for Migration, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes organized a high-level meeting in Durban, South Africa, on conflict-induced migration in Africa. The meeting advocated for integrated and comprehensive approaches to tackling root causes of forced displacement and for enhanced coordination among migration, peace and security actors in Africa. UNHCR organized a High Commissioner's Dialogue in December 2015 on the root causes of displacement, which addressed legal, economic, social and political solutions to the well-being and self-sufficiency of displaced persons. The Valletta Summit on Migration, held in Malta in November 2015, established a 1.9 billion euro trust fund for Africa to address forced displacement in the Sahel region, Lake Chad and the Horn of Africa.

F. Governance, rule of law and the administration of justice

39. OHCHR continued to support the promotion of accountability mechanisms on the continent, including the establishment of the Extraordinary African Chambers in the Senegalese judicial system to prosecute the former President of Chad, Hissène Habré, who was convicted of crimes against humanity.

40. UN-Women deployed 25 experts to support investigations and accountability processes for sexual and gender-based offences, including to various commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions established by the Human Rights Council on Eritrea, Libya and South Sudan, as well as to the Office of the Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court in the investigation of sexual and gender-based offences in Mali.

G. Women's empowerment and gender equality in peace and security

41. UN-Women supported the establishment of Peace Huts in Mali, thereby fostering women's participation in community dialogues as well as strengthening psychosocial healing and legal assistance for women experiencing conflict-related trauma. The United Nations Population Fund provided emergency obstetric and neonatal care and equipment to tackle sexual and gender-based violence in conflict situations in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and South Sudan.

42. In line with its advocacy mandate, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa commemorated the fifteenth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) by partnering with UN-Women and the African Union Commission to convene a high-level event at United Nations headquarters in New York in October 2015 to showcase Africa's experiences in implementing the resolution. On the margins of the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, in March 2016, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, OHCHR and the African Union organized a high-level event on the opportunities and challenges related to the African Year of Human Rights with Particular Focus on the Rights of Women to mobilize support for key African Union priorities for the year. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa also utilized the United Nations monitoring mechanism to review commitments made towards Africa's development to monitor the implementation of commitments made by Africa and its development partners to women's empowerment and gender equality in Africa, as outlined in my biennial report on the review of the implementation of the commitments made towards Africa's development (see A/71/203).

H. Support for security sector reform

43. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations supported the adoption of the Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform and Governance of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in June 2016. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations also continued to assist nationally led security sector reform efforts to develop effective and accountable policing and defence institutions, as well as civilian oversight and management bodies. In the Central African Republic, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic supported implementation of the security sector reform provisions in the Republican Pact for Peace, National Reconciliation and Reconstruction, including an inclusive national security dialogue and the preliminary screening of approximately 2,800 soldiers of the armed forces of the Central African Republic.

44. In Mali, MINUSMA supported the implementation of the defence and security provisions in the peace and reconciliation agreement, coordinated international efforts to reform the Malian security sector, and currently co-chairs the subcommittee on defence and security of the agreement monitoring committee. MINUSMA also supports development of policies on defence, anti-terrorism and border security, and the strengthening of governance and democratic oversight of the security sector.

I. Combating the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons and transnational organized crimes

45. On the margins of the African Union summit in January 2016, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat and the African Union jointly convened a high-level panel on "silencing the guns by 2020". The panel, inter alia, encouraged African Member States to ratify key international instruments, such as the Arms Trade Treaty, in order to improve the physical security and stockpile management of weapons.

46. The implementation of the West Africa Coast Initiative gained traction in the second half of 2015. The transnational organized crime units in Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone, supported by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, increased their operations and conducted joint regional and international investigations. Consistent with its new regional programme entitled "Promoting the rule of law and human security in Eastern Africa (2016-2021)", the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime redefined its strategic objectives for the region to focus on new and emerging trends in transnational organized crime, including maritime insecurity, wildlife and forest crimes, cybercrimes and the trafficking of migrants.

J. Countering terrorism and violent extremism

47. In February 2016, following the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 70/254 welcoming the launch of my Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, the Organization has stepped up its assistance to African countries and African regional organizations to combat terrorism and violent extremism. Consistent with the Plan of Action, such assistance underscores the importance of prevention and is grounded on principles of national ownership and United Nations support for national action plans to prevent violent extremism.

48. The Department of Political Affairs, through the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force Office and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, supported national and regional counter-terrorism efforts. Nationally, support was provided for the integrated implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Burkina Faso, Mali and Nigeria. Subregionally, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre and the African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism facilitated the development of regional counter-terrorism strategies in Central and Southern Africa, which were adopted in 2015.

IV. Persistent and emerging challenges confronting Africa: women's human rights for sustainable peace and security

49. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/292, the present section highlights persistent and emerging challenges for Africa, focusing on women's human rights as the basis for sustainable peace and security. Recent major global and continental processes and agendas, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063, stress that respect for women's human rights is a critical foundation for peace, security and sustainable development and as such is an essential component of all the core pillars of work of the United Nations and the African Union. The agendas underscore the central role of women in their implementation and also stress that unless the human rights of women are realized it will be impossible to achieve their goals and aspirations.

50. It was quite timely that two African women, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and my former Special Adviser on Post-2015 Development Planning, played vital leadership and strategic coordinating roles in the respective formulation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. That demonstrates that it is indeed time for action, not just commitment, with regard to African women's leadership.

51. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 provide a basis for addressing the social, economic, political, environmental and humanitarian dimensions of women's human rights in a holistic manner. That is complemented by the outcomes of the reviews of United Nations peace operations and the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and the Global Study and High-level review of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, all of which specifically address women's human rights in peace and security.

52. Building in particular on those reviews, the present section presents an overview of the state of women's rights with respect to peace and security in Africa. It also outlines the opportunities and entry points the new agendas provide for accelerating targeted actions to protect and promote the rights of African women in peace and security, as well as ways in which the United Nations can further support efforts in that regard.

A. State of women's rights in peace and security in Africa

53. African women experience the impact of violence and wars differently from men, in particular because sexual and gender-based violence is increasingly being used as a tactic and weapon of war and terror. As the reviews mentioned above showed, though women play multiple roles during conflicts, they are largely excluded, marginalized and underrepresented in peace and security processes and structures, especially at formal levels. Their issues and priorities are also often disregarded or only partially included in official peace and security processes, at both strategic and operational levels.

54. Consequently, African governments, regional and subregional organizations and civil society, alongside their international partners, have undertaken initiatives to empower women, protect women's rights and promote gender equality in peace

and security. The initiatives can be classified into four areas: normative and policy developments, promoting the right of women to participation in peace and security, the protection of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations and the right of women to access services and empowerment.

Normative and policy developments

55. Africa has adopted a range of policy and legal instruments on women's rights. In addition, African Member States are parties to most international instruments on women, peace and security, including general recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. One third of the countries globally that have national action plans to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and its related resolutions are in Africa. Other African countries have integrated the resolutions into their national gender policies, development plans, poverty reduction strategies and security and defence policies.

56. Regionally, ECOWAS and IGAD have adopted regional action plans on resolution 1325 (2000). At the continental level, the Constitutive Act of the African Union, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa and the African Women's Decade 2010-2020 further reflect Africa's vision and policies for women's rights in peace and security.

57. However, persistent implementation gaps undermine the efficacy of those instruments. The reviews showed that implementation has been slow, ad hoc, limited and uneven, partly owing to the lack of political will and awareness about the policies, deficits in gender expertise, persistent institutional and cultural barriers, inadequate resources and financing, lack of incentives and accountability mechanisms and poor coordination, among other reasons.

Promoting the right of women to participation in peace and security

58. Assessments of women's participation in peace and security in Africa have yielded mixed results. At national levels, while there have been significant gains in women's political participation, leadership and representation in national parliaments, the combined average of women in both lower and upper houses of parliament in sub-Saharan Africa is currently estimated at around 22 per cent, which is still far from the African Union's parity principle.

59. At the continental level, the African Union Commission applies a 50-50 gender parity principle, thereby ensuring the appointment of equal numbers of qualified women and men in its leadership structure. For the first time ever, both the Chairperson and the Secretary-General of the African Union Commission are women. Operationally, within the context of its five-year Gender, Peace and Security Programme (2015-2020), the African Union mainstreams gender and women's issues across the African Peace and Security Architecture through a network of gender focal points.

60. Besides those structural arrangements, women also engage on thematic issues. In a number of African countries, Women's Situation Rooms have been established to monitor and potentially prevent or mitigate electoral violence. The Situation Rooms are not, however, systematically linked to the conflict early warning systems

of the African Union and regional economic communities. In peacemaking, recent peace talks in Mali and South Sudan demonstrated that women are still underrepresented in official and formal processes as observers, negotiators, mediators, signatories and witnesses. Nonetheless, as was evident in Burundi, where women successfully mediated more than 3,000 local conflicts, women remain active at informal and community levels.

61. In peacekeeping, African women's participation remains minimal, despite the practice of deploying all-women formed police units or contingents. Consequently, the Common African Position on the Review of United Nations Peace Operations strongly recommended increasing the proportion of women deployed on peace missions and attitudinal changes to eradicate prejudices against women and promote a zero-tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse.

62. During post-conflict peacebuilding processes, African women have lobbied for their rights to participate in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, transitional justice, security sector reform and post-conflict constitutional reform, among other issues. In some countries, national sector-wide women security staff associations were created to foster women's participation in security sector reform. In the Great Lakes region and the Sahel region, women's platforms were established to enhance implementation of commitments enshrined in the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, and the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, respectively.

63. As the reviews and the statement by the President of the Security Council of 15 June 2016 (S/PRST/2016/9) highlighted, challenges to women's meaningful participation in peace and security remain. Those include resistance by key actors; symbolism; cultural biases; household responsibilities; time constraints; logistical barriers, including a lack of childcare facilities; limited access to relevant information and financial resources; and growing militarization, terrorism and violent extremism.

Protection of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations

64. Women's rights are severely undermined in crisis situations, including during violent conflicts, health pandemics and natural disasters. Women and children often constitute the majority of refugees and internally displaced persons. During the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease, more women than men were at risk because of their roles as primary caregivers and custodians of cultural rites for burials. Women and girls' access to basic services such as education are affected by the activities of terrorist and extremist groups. Women, in particular, are also more vulnerable to the effects of climate change as they constitute the bulk of the agricultural workforce and bear the brunt of housework and family care.

65. Africa has undertaken a range of preventative and remedial efforts to enhance the protection of women, especially from sexual violence in conflict. Some countries enforce national laws criminalizing rape and have established special courts to prosecute sexual offences. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the President appointed a Presidential Adviser on Sexual Violence and Child Recruitment. Some countries have created holistic one-stop centres for victims and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence and special protection units within the national police to deal exclusively with such offences. While the units have increased awareness about the problem and improved reporting and conviction

rates, as well as support services for survivors, they are generally underresourced and constrained.

66. Different African regional justice and accountability measures have been set up to monitor, report, investigate and prosecute sexual violence, among other offences. They include the Special Envoy of the African Union Commission Chairperson on Women, Peace and Security; the Extraordinary African Chambers in the Senegalese judiciary for the trial of the former President of Chad; the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa; and the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders.

67. Despite those measures, as the three reviews showed, there are still impediments to the protection of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations. Warring factions continue to violate principles of international humanitarian and human rights law, often with impunity. Women survivors of sexual violence are at risk of stigmatization. Women refugees and internally displaced persons risk physical attacks and sexual assault within and outside camps and settlement areas. Women's access to justice, especially at local levels, is largely undermined owing to cultural biases in traditional justice systems.

Right of women to access services and empowerment

68. Both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063, as well as the three reviews, stress the need to promote women's empowerment, autonomy and choice as basic human rights. The right of women to education, sexual and reproductive health, inheritance, land, productive resources and access to credit, as well as their right to participation, decision-making and leadership, are all forms of empowerment and are directly linked to women's security. However, most African women do not enjoy those rights and, as observed in the African gender scorecard, at the current pace of progress it will take Africa 81 years to achieve gender equality.

69. The scorecard reveals that despite Africa's good socioeconomic performance, the economic status of most African women has not changed significantly. Women are mostly active in the informal agricultural sector, which is characterized by low wages, investment and productivity, and difficult working conditions. Though African women are breaking new ground in the private sector, they are underrepresented in senior and top leadership positions. Only 4 of the 37 African countries that had available data for the scorecard have close to 50 per cent women in senior-level positions in the private sector. Recognizing that, the high-level event entitled "Women and youth entrepreneurship in Africa: the impact of entrepreneurial education on development", organized by the Government of Italy, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and other partners in June 2016, underscored the crucial need to support women and youth entrepreneurship and enterprises with strong social foundations in Africa.

70. The scorecard's assessment of women's access to land in 33 African countries showed that only 1 country had achieved full parity with respect to gender equality in access to and ownership of land. Obstacles largely derive from discriminatory social and cultural norms relating to inheritance and marriage. That affects many women smallholder farmers, who are unable to access loans to increase their investments and productivity.

71. While the maternal mortality rate fell from 870 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 460 in 2013, Africa still accounts for 63 per cent of maternal deaths globally. Similarly, although the total percentage share of women living with HIV/AIDS and the rates of new infections for all groups have fallen, the rate of infections for adolescent girls has increased. Despite progress towards achieving parity between girls and boys, especially at primary levels, the rate of illiteracy and retention of girls in schools remains a concern, owing to early and forced marriages, gender stereotypes, armed conflicts and the trend of deliberate attacks on girls by terrorist and extremist groups, among other reasons.

B. Opportunities for enhancing women's rights in peace and security in Africa

72. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 present new opportunities for advancing women's rights in peace and security in Africa in ways that substantially ensure women's economic empowerment and access to services. The 2030 Agenda includes a specific goal and cross-cutting targets on gender equality, the empowerment of women and women's rights. It calls for, inter alia, the eradication of all legal, social and economic barriers to women's rights and empowerment and the complete elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women, including harmful traditional practices. It calls for investments to close the gender gap, including through quality education, women's economic empowerment reforms, access to land and decent employment, financial inclusion and technological support for women in sustainable agriculture and women's participation in peacebuilding and State-building, and for high-quality data disaggregated by gender.

73. The reviews of United Nations peace operations and the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and the Global Study and High-level review of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security provide recommendations on women's rights, cutting across the continuum of peace and security. All underscore the need to implement existing commitments to women, peace and security, and outline concrete practical proposals for empowering and ensuring women's participation in decision-making and leadership in efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts and build and sustain peace. The reviews also stress the need for institutional reforms to ensure the means of implementation, including sustained, predictable financing.

74. Agenda 2063 and its first 10-year implementation plan provide an integrated blueprint for addressing issues relating to women's rights in a holistic manner. It emphasizes the full empowerment of women and girls in all spheres, with equal social, economic and political rights. It calls for the complete eradication of all forms of violence and discrimination against women, and for full gender parity in both public and private sectors. The Agenda 2063 flagship project on silencing all guns by 2020, the African Union's five-year Gender, Peace and Security Programme and the forthcoming continent-level results framework on women, peace and security all include specific targets and actions to enhance the implementation of Africa's women, peace and security agenda.

C. Role of the United Nations system in supporting women's rights in peace and security in Africa

75. The promotion of gender equality and women's human rights are central to the realization of the core goals of the United Nations. Consequently, throughout my tenure in office, I have promoted women's rights and gender equality both globally and within the United Nations system. I appointed more than 100 highly qualified women, including African women, as either Under-Secretaries-General or Assistant Secretaries-General. The various entities on gender and women's issues were consolidated into a single strong entity, UN-Women, currently headed by an African woman. Today, eminent women serve as my special representatives and heads of field missions, as opposed to 2006, when there were none. Their presence has dismantled the gendered stereotypes surrounding such positions.

76. The Security Council convenes an Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security, with UN-Women as its secretariat, to facilitate a systematic approach and enable greater oversight and coordination of implementation efforts on women, peace and security within the Council. The Peacebuilding Commission is expected to adopt its own gender policy to enhance its contributions to gender equality and the empowerment of women in political processes and post-conflict development.

77. The United Nations system continues to support African efforts to advance women's rights and promote women's participation in peace and security, in keeping with the Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security and my Seven-Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding, among other efforts. United Nations system entities are encouraged to allocate at least 15 per cent of their peacebuilding funds to projects that address women's specific needs, advance gender equality and empower women. So far, only the Peacebuilding Fund has achieved that goal, and more efforts are required to address funding gaps for the women, peace and security agenda.

78. In that respect, the Global Acceleration Instrument for Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, recommended by the Global Study and further recognized by the Security Council in resolution 2242 (2015), will focus on an initial list of 22 countries eligible to receive funding, 10 of which are African. It is important that the Global Acceleration Instrument ensure its funding priorities align with Agenda 2063 and engage similar African mechanisms, such as the African Union Peace Fund and the Fund for African Women.

79. As part of global efforts to eliminate barriers to women's rights, I launched the UNiTE campaign to End Violence Against Women that has increased political support and mobilized resources to prevent and end violence against women and girls. The first annual International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, which called for collective action to condemn the use of sexual violence as a deliberate strategy of war, was on 19 June 2016. Amid allegations of sexual abuse by peacekeepers, the United Nations continues to implement its zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, and its human rights due diligence policy within its peacekeeping and political missions. The United Nations mobilizes and engages men and boys in promoting the rights of women and gender equality, including through initiatives such as the HeForShe and Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality campaigns, which have contributed to changing mindsets and behaviour, especially among men.

80. The United Nations will continue to engage African Member States, regional and subregional organizations and civil society in implementing and reviewing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2063 Agenda, and in finalizing the development of the continent-level results framework on women, peace and security, which will be a vital instrument for sustaining political momentum for Africa's women, peace and security agenda.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

81. The focus on the human rights of women is a critical part of the global United Nations agenda to uphold the universality and inalienability of the human rights of all persons, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights treaties. As such, it is not an issue for women only. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 highlight the central place and role Africa and African women have played in their realization, and they further outline measures to eliminate discrimination and violence against women, promote gender equality, empower women and fully respect the human rights of women as a basis for achieving inclusive, transformative and sustainable peace and development. Specific measures to promote the rights of women in peace and security are outlined in the recommendations of the reviews of United Nations peace operations and the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and the Global Study and High-level review of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

82. Implementation of all those measures is critical. African Member States, regional and subregional organizations, the private sector, civil society and the international community, including the United Nations, must implement those renewed commitments in ways that bring about meaningful results for Africa in general and African women and girls in particular. To ensure effectiveness, all global and regional stakeholders must adopt a coherent and harmonized approach throughout the implementation process in order to maximize limited resources, avoid unnecessary fragmentation and duplication and ensure that international support aligns with Africa's own priorities. The implementation process must also include measures to consistently and systematically engage and support African women and girls and African women's organizations.

African countries, the African Union, including the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the African Peer Review Mechanism, and regional economic communities

83. African Member States should implement existing international and regional human rights instruments, including the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. They should adopt and implement national action plans on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) in order to enhance meaningful participation of women in national security structures and processes, combat sexual and gender-based violence and ensure predictable resources for implementing the women, peace and security agenda.

84. Consistent with the recommendations of the three reviews, African Member States and regional and subregional organizations should strengthen their investment in effective conflict prevention and human rights. They should foster

stronger partnerships and ensure more predictable financing and greater participation of women and youth in efforts to prevent conflicts and build and sustain peace at all levels, prevent and combat terrorism and violent extremism and tackle climate change.

85. African Member States, with the support of the African Union and regional economic communities, should strengthen the institutional and operational capacities of national structures for gender equality and the empowerment of women, including gender and women's affairs ministries. They should also strengthen national accountability and response mechanisms for sexual and gender-based violence. That will require a focus on means of implementation, including financial resources, technology, capacity-building, data and statistics disaggregated by sex and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

86. Consistent with its gender parity principle, the African Union and regional economic communities should enhance the participation and representation of women in all structures for peace and security, including at leadership and decision-making levels. They should promote closer consultation and coordination between their peace and security and gender and women's affairs structures, including in implementing the forthcoming continent-level results framework and regional actions plans on women, peace and security.

87. Institutional linkages among the African Peace and Security Architecture, the African Governance Architecture and the development architecture of the African Union, including the New Partnership for Africa's Development, should be strengthened in addressing the structural root causes of conflicts and instability as well as structural violence against women. For instance, coordination among the African Peer Review Mechanism, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the Commission's Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa and Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders should be enhanced.

88. African Member States should implement existing initiatives to eliminate all institutional and cultural barriers to women's human rights. Those include initiatives to eradicate all harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation, and end child marriage, such as the Common African Position on the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage, which continues until 2017.

International community and the United Nations system

89. Consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the international community, including the United Nations system, should support the implementation of Agenda 2063, including by building on its existing support to the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The General Assembly should adopt a resolution to endorse and support the implementation of Agenda 2063, as requested by the African Union in its decision on the Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda.

90. To ensure coherence in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063, the international community, including the United Nations system, should support Africa's annual stakeholder platforms for reviewing progress in the implementation of Agenda 2063, including the African Union ministerial committee on Agenda 2063. Support should also be provided to both the African Union and the regional

economic communities to develop, finalize and operationalize the African human security index and the African gender scorecard, in line with Agenda 2063.

91. Existing United Nations support to the Office of the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on women, peace and security, and the Directorate of Women, Gender and Development of the African Union Commission, as well as to the African Union's five-year Gender, Peace and Security Programme, should be enhanced, especially with respect to accelerating the finalization of the continent-level results framework on women, peace and security.

92. The United Nations system should further enhance its partnership with the African Union and regional economic communities on human rights, including in implementing the Human Rights Strategy for Africa of the African Union, strengthening support for African human rights organs such as the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the Commission's Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa and Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders.

African civil society and the private sector

93. African civil society groups, including women's organizations and the media, should systematically support and expand initiatives that target and engage men and boys as champions for women's rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women, including influential male traditional, community and religious leaders.

94. Given strong linkages among women's rights, economic empowerment and women's security, the private sector, within and outside Africa, should enhance support for entrepreneurship development for African women and girls, including by closing the skills gap and promoting women's leadership in the private sector.